DK

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY

Contents

Discover Florence and Tuscany

Welcome to Florence and Tuscany

Reasons to Love Florence and Tuscany

Explore Florence and Tuscany

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY ITINERARIES

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR ART LOVERS

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR FAMILIES

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR FOODIES

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR RAISE A GLASS

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR VILLAS AND GARDENS

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR RELAXATION

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY ON A BUDGET

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR MUSIC LOVERS

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR SHOPPERS

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR ARCHITECTURE

A Year in Florence and Tuscany

A Brief History

Experience Florence

Around the Duomo

Around Santa Croce

Around San Lorenzo
Oltrarno

Experience Tuscany

Northeast Tuscany
Central Tuscany
Southeast Tuscany
Northwest Tuscany
Southwest Tuscany

Need to Know

Before You Go
Getting Around
Practical Information

KEY TO MAIN ICONS
PRICE GUIDE
KEY TO MAPS
Phrase Book
Acknowledgments
Copyright

key to main icons

- Admission charge
- Guided tour
- Restaurant
- Café
- Shop
- Map
- Address/Location
- Telephone
- International airport
- Train
- Visitor information
- Open
- Closed
- Website

price guide

Throughout the guide the following price categories have been applied:

¡¡¡ On a budget

¡¡¡ Mid-range

¡¡¡ Splurge

key to maps

CITY AND TOWN MAPS

- Railway station
- Tram stop
- Bus station
- Ferry boarding point
- Visitor information
- Place of interest
- Pedestrian area
- Railway
- Tunnel
- Suggested route
- Route start/end point

REGIONAL MAPS

- Place of interest
- International airport
- Motorway and junction
- Main road
- Other road
- Railway
- Ferry route
- Regional boundary
- Peak

◀ Contents

Discover Florence and Tuscany

▲ Panoramic views over Ponte Vecchio

Welcome to Florence and Tuscany

Reasons to Love Florence and Tuscany

Explore Florence and Tuscany

Florence and Tuscany Itineraries

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR ART LOVERS

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR FAMILIES

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR FOODIES

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR RAISE A GLASS

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR VILLAS AND GARDENS

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR RELAXATION

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY ON A BUDGET

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR MUSIC LOVERS

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR SHOPPERS

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR ARCHITECTURE

A Year in Florence and Tuscany

A Brief History

Welcome To
FLORENCE AND TUSCANY

▲ The view over Florence from Piazzale Michelangelo.

Awe-inspiring Renaissance masterpieces. Ruby-red Chianti and pungent pecorino cheese. Cypress-covered hills and maze-like medieval towns, packed with age-old tradition. Whatever your dream trip to Florence and Tuscany includes, this DK travel guide is the perfect companion.

1

2

3

As the birthplace of the Renaissance, Florence and Tuscany has an artistic legacy that is second to none. From Michelangelo's *David* to the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the sheer concentration of world-famous icons is breathtaking. The region's culinary heritage is equally rich, with every town and village producing its own unique delicacies: try a *panino col lampredotto* in Florence, go truffle hunting in San Miniato or sup *cacciucco* in Livorno. And no trip to Tuscany would be complete without sampling the local wine. Brunello di Montalcino, Vernaccia di San Gimignano – these celebrated names are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the vast array of exquisite varieties on offer.

Dating back to medieval times, Tuscany's appealing towns and cities are a perfectly preserved slice of the past. Their historic streets are home to an array of architectural delights and lively piazzas. The countryside is calmer but no less colourful: the mesmerizing landscapes include the lush green hills of Val d'Orcia, the rainbow-coloured beaches of Elba and the otherworldly white marble quarries of Carrara. Urban or rural, this is Italy at its most truly picturesque.

From the winding streets of Florence to the outer reaches of the Tuscan Archipelago, we've broken the region down into easily navigable chapters, with detailed itineraries, expert local knowledge and colourful, comprehensive maps to help you plan the perfect visit. Whether you're staying for a weekend, a week, or longer, this DK travel guide will ensure that you see the very best the region has to offer. Enjoy the book, and enjoy Florence and Tuscany.

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1 Florence's Palantine Gallery in the Palazzo Pitti.

2 A rustic farmhouse and cypress trees in Tuscany.

3 The dramatic exterior of the Santa Croce in Florence.

REASONS TO LOVE

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY

Sublime landscapes, Renaissance artworks, picturesque towns, and delectable local dishes and wines: there are so many reasons to love Florence and Tuscany. Here, we pick some of our favourites.

1 CITYSCAPES

▲ The wide-open view of central Florence from Piazzale Michelangelo, taking in the famous Duomo and Ponte Vecchio, is quite simply awe-inspiring.

2 VAL D'ORCIA LANDSCAPES

▲ Gentle hillsides, pockets of woodland, and rows of cypresses along winding lanes and around the occasional stone chapel: picture-perfect Val d'Orcia is a photographer's paradise.

3 SIENA'S PIAZZA DEL CAMPO

▲ The piazza is the centre of community life in Tuscany and the welcome upon entering the delightful shell-shaped heart of Siena is one of the warmest.

4 THE LEANING TOWER

▲ One of the Seven Wonders of the medieval world, Pisa’s off-kilter tower still has the power to surprise, however well-prepared you are.

5 FLORENCE FASHION

▲ Italy's original capital of fashion, Florence oozes style. Many of the world's top designers, including Gucci, hail from the city; view their eye-catching wares around Via de' Tornabuoni.

6 Tuscan Food

▲ Italian cuisine is a world favourite, and Tuscany’s is among the tastiest. Pride of place goes to the chunky Fiorentina steak: a treat for meat lovers.

7 ELBA AND THE ISLANDS

▲ Salty sea spray and sunbeams sparkling on the water – a boat trip around Elba and the Tuscan Archipelago is a joy for the senses.

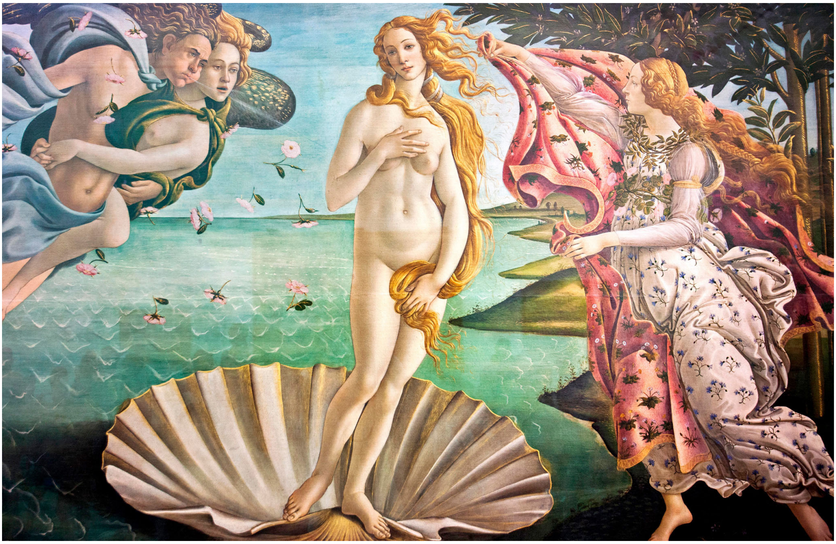
8 SAN GIMIGNANO

▲ With its forest of towers and charming medieval centre built of stone, San Gimignano is the quintessential Tuscan hill town. Wander at will through the pretty piazzas and alluring lanes.

9 MICHELANGELO’S MARBLE

▲ Relive the creation of Michelangelo’s *David* by touring the marble quarries of Carrara and then seeing the sculpture itself in the Galleria dell’Accademia in Florence.

10 ARTISTIC MASTERPIECES



▲ As the birthplace of countless Old Masters, Tuscany's artistic heritage is unparalleled. Immerse yourself in the breathtaking collections of world-class galleries such as the Uffizi.

11 ETRUSCAN TREASURES

▲ Exploring southwest Tuscany’s Etruscan sites offers a fascinating insight into the ancient world. Trace the footsteps of the region’s founders along the sunken roads of the Vie Cave (see Etruscan Footpaths).

12 TUSCAN WINES

▲ Brunello di Montalcino, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano and Chianti Classico – many of Italy’s finest wines are Tuscan. Don’t miss *cantucci* with Vin Santo as an end-of-meal treat.

Explore
FLORENCE and TUSCANY

n This guide divides Florence and Tuscany into six colour-coded sightseeing areas, as shown on this map. Find out more about each area on the following pages.

Florence and Tuscany Itineraries

▲ The Duomo dominating Florence’s skyline.

2 DAYS A Tour of Florence

7 DAYS In Tuscany

10 DAYS In Florence and Tuscany

2 DAYS

A Tour of Florence

With their artistic legacy, picture-perfect countryside and delicious regional delicacies, Florence and Tuscany are a treasure trove for travellers. Whether you want to hit the big-ticket museums and churches in Florence, sample delicacies in local osterias or simply enjoy wandering through hilltop villages, our itineraries will help you make the most of your visit.

Day 1

Morning

Start the day at the magnificent Piazza Duomo; climb Brunelleschi's enormous dome and admire the famous bronze Baptistry doors before strolling to Piazza della Signoria, where a replica of Michelangelo's *David* can be seen. Just around the corner, Mercato Nuovo sells exquisite Florentine souvenirs, including leather goods and speciality paper. After crossing Ponte Vecchio, turn left and walk along the river for lunch at Osteria Antica Mescita San Niccolò.

Afternoon

Refuelled and refreshed, you will be ready for the walk up to Piazzale Michelangelo for awe-inspiring views. Carry on to San Miniato al Monte before taking the shorter – but steeper – Salita al Monte back down the hill, stopping at the rose garden. Cross the Ponte alle Grazie bridge to reach Santa Croce. Explore the interior of this incredible church, paying your respects to the tombs of Michelangelo, Machiavelli and Galileo. Don't leave without a visit to the leather school at the rear.

Evening

Have dinner at the excellent Gucci Garden *(Piazza della Signoria 10)*.

Morning

Make the San Lorenzo complex, including the startling Cappelle Medicee (see Around San Lorenzo), today's first stop, and follow it with a look around the adjacent Mercato Centrale. See the frescoes at Santa Maria Novella nearby before making a tiny detour to the extraordinary Officina Profumo Farmaceutica SMN, a historic perfumery (see Officina Profumo Farmaceutica SMN). For a tasty lunch and a glass of wine, try Cantinetta Antinori, just beyond Santa Maria Novella.

Afternoon

After lunch, stroll past the designer stores of Via de' Tornabuoni, stopping just before the river at the Museo Ferragamo to see shoes worn by some of Hollywood's classic stars. Cross the bridge to the Oltrarno district where the shopping theme changes to antiques on the way to Palazzo Pitti. After visiting the rich interiors and galleries of this 15th-century palace, end the afternoon with a relaxing stroll around the Boboli Gardens.

Evening

Reward yourself with an aperitivo in Piazza Santo Spirito before dining alfresco at one of the Oltrarno's local restaurants, such as I'Brindellone *(Piazza Piattellina 10)*.

▲ Piazza Santo Spirito.

7 DAYS

In Tuscany

Day 1

Morning

Begin your week in Pisa at the celebrated Leaning Tower and the Piazza del Duomo. Climb the tower and explore the impressive Duomo and Baptistry before tucking into a traditional *cecina* (chickpea fritter) for lunch at Il Montino *(Via del Monte 1)*.

Afternoon

Wander around the historic streets of central Pisa and then take the train to Florence.

Evening

End the day with a stroll by the Arno River and a hearty Tuscan dinner at Il Latini *(Via dei Palchetti 6R)*.

Day 2

Morning

Dedicate the morning to the Uffizi followed by a *panino* and a glass of wine at I Fratellini, just off Piazza della Signoria.

Afternoon

Wander from the Duomo to the Ponte Vecchio and explore the antique shops and quiet backstreets of the Oltrarno. Afterwards, visit the Brancacci Chapel to see the famous *Life of St Peter* frescoes.

Evening

Walk to Piazzale Michelangelo for panoramic views of the city at sunset before dining at Enoteca Fuori Porta at the bottom of the hill.

Day 3

Morning

Drive from Florence along the Strada Chiantigiana, through the picturesque vine-covered hills of Chianti. Stop at Casa del Chianti Classico in Radda, and have lunch at the bistrot.

Afternoon

Drive to San Gimignano to see its towers, then head for Siena.

Evening

En route to Siena, stop in at the walled village of Monteriggioni for dinner at Il Pozzo *(Piazza Roma 2)*.

Day 4

Morning

Start your day at Siena's striking tiger-striped Duomo and, after coffee on Piazza del Campo, climb Torre del Mangia. Try nearby Osteria Il Grattacielo *(Via dei Pontani 8)* for lunch.

Afternoon

Explore the narrow medieval streets of central Siena, visit the serene Santuario e Casa di Santa Caterina and stroll in the nearby Orto de' Pecci, a green oasis in the heart of Siena.

Evening

For a tasty fresh pasta dinner, head to Osteria da Cice *(Via S. Pietro 32)*.

Day 5

Morning

Dedicate today to the region's best food and wine, starting at the hill town of Montalcino, some 40 km (25 miles) from Siena. Enjoy a tasting of Brunello at the Fattoria dei Barbi winery and settle down for a leisurely lunch at their bistro.

Afternoon

Nearby Pienza is famous for its pecorino (sheep's cheese). To buy some of the best, drop into local delicatessen Monaci Remo

(Via Tenente Niccolo' Piccolomini 2).

Evening

End the day by visiting the ancient wine cellars and trying the Vino Nobile in Montepulciano.

Day 6

Morning

Continue south to reach Pitigliano, a medieval town clamped to a tufa ridge. Explore the narrow streets and take in the dizzying views before grabbing lunch at Trattoria Il Grillo *(Via Cavour 18)*.

Afternoon

From here it's a 5-km (3-mile) walk along Vie Cave to pretty Sovana. Walk or take the bus back to Pitigliano and drive to Saturnia.

Evening

Spend the evening dining and using the spa at Terme di Saturnia.

Day 7

Morning

Take a leisurely stroll around the Porto Ercole village which is home to a number of 16th-century fortifications (see Monte Argentario).

Afternoon

Enjoy a meal at one of the many excellent seafood restaurants here.

▲ Pisa’s Leaning Tower.

10 DAYS

In Florence and Tuscany

Day 1

Morning

Start the first day of your road trip through Tuscany by exploring the pretty town of Palazzuolo sul Senio. Drive on to the excellent farmhouse restaurant La Selva di Frena *(Via Frena 1422)* near Firenzuola for lunch, enjoying the peace and quiet of the wooded hillsides of Mugello on the way.

Afternoon

Continue past Scarperia to Parco Mediceo di Pratolino, where you can stretch your legs with a stroll around the gardens. Make a quick stop in Fiesole before arriving in Florence.

Evening

End the day with a night out in Florence's Oltrarno district, with a meal of genuine Tuscan food at Trattoria Cammillo *(Borgo San Jacopo 57R)*.

Day 2

Morning

Start early and go straight to see Florence's magnificent Duomo and Baptistry. From here it's a short walk to Piazza della Signoria and the Ponte Vecchio; cross the bridge and stroll along the riverside to the San Niccolò neighbourhood, where the centuries-old Osteria Antica Mescita San Niccolò *(Via di San Niccolò 60R)* makes an ideal lunch stop.

Afternoon

Take the short but steep walk up to Piazzale Michelangelo for stunning views of the city. Cross back over the Arno to Santa

Croce and, after exploring the splendid church, visit the historic leather school in the former monastery at its rear.

Evening

Enjoy a drink in Piazza Santo Spirito and then spend another evening among the many bars and restaurants of the Oltrarno.

Day 3

Morning

Take the Fi-Pi-Li dual carriageway west from Florence towards Pisa, with a slight detour to Pontedera to see the Piaggio Vespa museum. Once you reach Pisa have a stroll around the centre and a coffee at one of the bars in Piazza Cairoli by the river, leaving the Leaning Tower for the afternoon. For lunch, try Pisa's speciality *cecina* (chickpea fritters) – you can find it in many informal restaurants around town.

Afternoon

Dedicate the afternoon to exploring the iconic Piazza del Duomo: climb the Leaning Tower and visit the beautiful Romanesque Duomo and Baptistry.

Evening

Take a table in the leafy courtyard of La Pergoletta *(Via delle Belle Torri 36)*, which serves local Tuscan dishes and excellent wines.

Day 4

Morning

Leave Pisa and drive south, enjoying the sea views en route before reaching Bolgheri (see Costa degli Etruschi) in time for a pre-booked winery tour and tasting along the cypress-lined Wine Road.

Afternoon

Enjoy lunch at Tenuta Guado al Tasso *(antinori.it/en/vino/guado-al-tasso)*, before driving on to Piombino and catching the ferry to Elba. Spend the rest of the day exploring Portoferraio, making sure to have a look at Napoleon's one-time residence, Palazzina

Napoleonica.

Evening

Walk down to Ristorante Le Viste on the beach of the same name for dinner on the terrace while watching the sun set over the sea.

Day 5

Morning

Take a tour of Elba, setting off from Portoferraio towards Napoleon's countryside residence, Villa San Martino, then following the coast road anti-clockwise around the island. Marciana Marina has a sandy beach if you fancy a swim, or you can take the cable-car from Marciana Alta to the top of Monte Capanne.

Afternoon

Continue on around to the hilltop village of Capoliveri in southern Elba and then to Porto Azzurro for the rest of the day. Here, relax with a swim or a stroll around the marina.

Evening

There are plenty of seafront restaurants to choose from here; pick your favourite and settle in for a dinner with a view.

Day 6

Morning

Return to the mainland first thing and explore the fascinating Etruscan and Roman remains at the archaeological area of Populonia near Piombino.

Afternoon

Carry on south along the coast road to the Punta Ala promontory (see The Maremma). Stop for a quick swim on one of the beaches near the Sterpaia Nature Park, or drive on further to Cala Violina, a beach hidden down a forest path.

Evening

Stroll around Punta Ala harbour for a sundowner, then head to

one of the town's waterfront restaurants for dinner.

Day 7

Morning

Revitalized after your stay at Punta Ala, don walking boots to explore the Parco Naturale della Maremma. Pick up fresh produce for a picnic lunch from the Da Rita kiosk *(Strada del Barbicato 54, Alberese)* on your way to the entrance at the Alberese visitor centre.

Afternoon

Leave the coast and drive inland, reaching the lovely hilltop village of Montalcino in time to visit one of the wineries in the historic centre – the wines made here are some of Italy's best.

Evening

Spend the night at nearby Bagno Vignoni, with its unusual piazza dominated by a spa pool.

Day 8

Morning

A camera is essential this morning as you explore the idyllic Val d'Orcia. You can enjoy a stunning panorama of the area over lunch at Terrazza Val d'Orcia in Pienza *(Via Santa Caterina 1)*.

Afternoon

Head east for more wonderful views and Renaissance palazzi at Montepulciano, perhaps picking up a bottle of the famous Vino Nobiledi Montepulciano from one of the town's historic cellars, before continuing on to the ancient city of Cortona.

Evening

Spend the evening among Cortona's pretty piazzas. Trattoria La Grotta *(Piazza Baldelli 3)* is our recommendation for dinner.

Day 9

Morning

Dedicate today to exploring the narrow stone alleys and churches of Cortona's historic centre. Beginning at Santa

Margherita, wind your way up to the Fortezza Medicea, where you can have lunch at the bistro inside the castle.

Afternoon

Visit the tranquil wooded Eremo Le Celle Franciscan complex just outside town, before getting back on the road to reach Arezzo for the evening.

Evening

Once settled in Arezzo, head to the Piazza Grande. Here you can sit back with a drink at one of the bars overlooking the square before your evening meal.

Day 10

Morning

Make sure to pre-book a visit to the Basilica of San Francesco, to view Piero della Francesca's stunning *Legend of the True Cross* fresco cycle. Follow this by purchasing picnic supplies at the Dal Moro deli on nearby Via Cavour, then stroll past Casa Vasari and the Duomo before choosing a spot in Il Prato park to enjoy your feast.

Afternoon

End your journey through this truly delightful region with a walk around the ramparts of the Fortezza Medicea, with its glorious views across the Tuscan countryside.

▲ Façade of Florence’s magnificent Duomo.

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR
ART LOVERS

Tuscany is a paradise for art lovers, with countless world-famous masterpieces, a multitude of stunning cities of art – including Florence, the undisputed home of the Renaissance – and a thriving contemporary art scene. With the region's inspiring landscapes, it's no wonder that so many top artists were drawn to work here.

▲ Street artists re-creating a Renaissance masterpiece on the pavements of Florence

Colourful Street Art

In between the galleries and museums, keep an eye out for art of a less classical kind. Pisa is home to the colourful *Tuttomondo* mural by Keith Haring, the American artist's last public work, while central Florence is dotted with Italian artist Blub's reimaginings of famous portraits, in which the subjects are depicted underwater wearing a snorkel and mask. Clet, a French artist whose works adorn numerous street signs, has a studio in Florence's San Niccolò district. Explore the latest street art with the city's map of spaces available for approved open-air works *(firenzestreetart.com)*.

Big Hitters

As the birthplace of the Renaissance, Florence is home to many artistic masterpieces. While the Galleria dell'Accademia has

Michelangelo's iconic sculpture of David, the Uffizi features Florence's greatest art collection. Browse the 1,700 artworks, including pieces by Raphael and Titian – be aware of an attack of Stendhal, or Florence Syndrome, a psychosomatic illness triggered by viewing lots of beautiful art.

Stunning Sculptures

Tuscany's white Carrara marble has been popular with sculptors since Roman times. Pietrasanta has numerous contemporary works on display. The Loggia dei Lanzi has iconic sculptures (see Piazza Della Signoria). Over at the Bargello, see bronze works by the likes of Donatello.

Renaissance Frescoes

The fresco (literally "fresh") technique was popular in the Renaissance and results in remarkably vivid colours. Those in Florence's Brancacci Chapel are exceptional, as is the series by Piero della Francesca at San Francesco in Arezzo. Fra Angelico's intricate frescoes can be seen up-close in small former cells at the convent of San Marco.

The Female Renaissance

Plautilla Nelli (1524–1588) is considered one of the city's first female Renaissance artists. A Florentine, Nelli was a nun as well as a selftaught painter. For centuries her paintings had been forgotten and buried away until the organization, Advancing Women Artists, rediscovered her work. An impressive piece by Nelli, *The Last Supper*, was restored by the group and exhibited in the Santa Maria Novella Museum in 2019.

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES

From the wooded mountains of the north to the vine-covered hills of Chianti, the variety of landscapes in Tuscany make it one of Italy's most beautiful regions. While the area's sweeping valley scenes may steal the spotlight, Tuscany's Mediterranean coastline and idyllic islands are equally alluring.

▲ Palazzo Vecchio with Duomo Santa Maria del Fiori in the background

Stunning Cityscapes

The towers that adorn many of Tuscany's piazzas are ideal for bird's-eye views of winding streets and traditional terracotta rooftops. For outstanding vistas over Florence, however, climb to Piazzale Michelangelo. Hilly Siena has startling panoramas around every corner; the rear view of Il Campo from Piazza Mercato is particularly striking.

Magnificent Mountains

The marble-rich mountains near Carrara glisten such a brilliant white as to resemble snow from a distance, recalling the Alpine peaks of northern Italy. Get a little closer, however, and the quarry areas appear more like lunar landscapes. The areas of Garfagnana, Mugello and Casentino, which border on the Apennine Mountains, also offer dramatic landscapes. Visit this region in autumn when the

colours of the trees are especially striking.

Colourful Beaches

Thanks to the high concentration of minerals, the terrain on Elba displays an incredible array of colours. While the sands around Portoferraio are gleaming white, those at Terranera bay near Porto Azzurro glisten black due to the presence of hematite, and at Cala Seregola (Rio Marina) they appear reddish thanks to the iron ore once mined there. For quintessential fine golden sands, try Marina di Campo, Elba's most popular beach town.

Picture-Perfect Valleys

Landscapes don't get much more picturesque than Val d'Orcia's classic Tuscan scenes. Shaped in the Renaissance period, the area features on countless postcards and even has UNESCO World Heritage status. For more typically Tuscan landscapes, head to the Viale dei Cipressi. This straight, 5-km- (3-mile-) long cypress-lined avenue links the tiny San Guido oratory on the Via Aurelia to the village of Bolgheri.

Did You Know?

Many scenes from Ridley Scott's epic *Gladiator* were filmed in the ravishing Val d'Orcia.

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR FAMILIES

Families are at the centre of Italian life, so children receive a warm welcome wherever they go. An eclectic selection of family-oriented activities and attractions means that it's easy to keep kids entertained, and mealtimes are a breeze with a tempting array of child-friendly pizzas and pasta.

▲ Splashing around in the pools at the Acqua Village in Follonica

Theme Park Fun

Exhilarating tree-top courses for all ages are on offer at adventure parks such as Il Gigante (Vaglia, opposite Parco Pratolino), while water parks like the Acqua Villages at Cecina and Follonica are perfect for cooling down in summer. Immerse yourself in a fairytale world at Collodi's Pinocchio Park, which also has a butterfly house and historic gardens, or spend a day thrill-seeking on the rides at Il Cavallino Matto (Castagneto Carducci).

Buckets and Spades

Tuscany abounds in sandy beaches with shallow water, which are

ideal for young children. Viareggio and the Versilia area are particularly well-off for beaches, while the resort of Marina di Bibbona is a favourite among families thanks to its relaxed atmosphere, spacious beach and entertainments such as the Bibbolandia fun park.

Farm Experiences

Tuscany's Fattorie Didattiche, which literally means "educational farms", offer a fun insight into traditional rural life. At Agriturismo Il Giardino *(agriturismoilgiardino.com)* kids can meet the animals, help with the olive harvest and take horse-riding lessons. In the Maremma, the *butteri* (traditional Tuscan cowboys) continue to work with the cattle at the Alberese estate *(alberese.com)*, where confident riders can join them on horseback.

Tasty Treats

Italian food remains a perennial favourite among children. An afternoon gelato is a delightful way to cool down, while a pizza dinner is a guaranteed hit (ask for a "pizza baby" for a smaller size).

The Great Outdoors

Families can hire bikes and explore the coastal landscape of Parco Naturale della Maremma. Or, if you prefer to walk, take a hike around Colle di Val d'Elsa, which hosts an array of child-friendly hikes. The San Rossore Estate, a vast natural haven near Pisa also makes for a great day out. Here, children can spot the local fauna and flora, which includes white ibis and herons, wild boar, fallow deer, and the carnivorous plant *drosera*.

TOP 3

MUSEUMS FOR CHILDREN

Museo Leonardo da Vinci, Florence

An interactive collection of Leonardo’s weird and wonderful inventions.

Piccolo Museo dei Bambini, Borgo San Lorenzo

A multisensory museum specially for children, which includes a toy-swapping area.

Archeodromo, Poggibonsi

Medieval history is brought to life at full-sized reed and mud huts populated by costumed villagers.

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR FOODIES

Traditionally hearty and flavoursome, Tuscany's simple specialities allow the character and taste of the region's excellent ingredients to shine through. Popular favourites include thick-cut Bistecca Fiorentina (a steak dish), while vegetarians are well catered for with innumerable pasta and pizza options.

▲ Sampling the wares at a food festival in Livorno

Flavourful Festivals

Tuscany's countless food festivals *(sagre)* provide a fantastic opportunity to try local specialities. Highlights include the traditional steak festival held in Cortona (mid-August), the Lari cherry festival (last weekend May and first weekend June) and the *cacciucco* (hearty seafood soup) festival in Livorno (mid-June). The San Miniato truffle and Pienza cheese festivals (November and September respectively) celebrate some of the region's most prestigious produce.

Tuscan Staples

The traditional salt-free Tuscan bread, *pane toscano* – which originated in the 12th century when Pisa placed a blockade on the trade of salt to Florence – is the perfect partner for the tasty local cold cuts and cheeses. Be sure to try *finocchiona* (the region's speciality salami flavoured with fennel seeds) and *lardo di colonnata* (pork aged with herbs and spices in marble vats), as well as the fabulous pecorino sheep's cheese from Pienza. A glass of Chianti or

one of Tuscany's other red wines makes the ideal accompaniment.

Where to Eat

From three-star Michelin fine dining in Florence's Enoteca Pinchiorri *(enotecapinchiorri.it)* to market stalls, the choice of where to eat couldn't be more varied. For quality local produce in a relaxed environment, seek out delis like Gino Cacino (Siena) and butcher-restaurants such as Macelleria Stiaccini (Castellina in Chianti) and Falorni (Greve in Chianti).

Florentine Market Stalls

Central Florence is peppered with kiosks laden with steaming pans of *lampredotto*, made from tripe and the city's most traditional and popular street food. The top stalls in the city include Nencioni (Piazza Mercato Nuovo), Nerbone (Mercato Centrale) and L'Antico Trippaio (Piazza de' Cimatori).

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY

RAISE A GLASS

Vast and varied, Tuscany's wine scene is one of the most exciting in Italy. From punchy reds like Brunello di Montalcino to crisp whites such as Vernaccia di San Gimignano to aromatic Aleatico dessert wine, every bottle is packed with flavour. Tour the region's wineries to find your favourite.

▲ Vineyards at the picturesque Antinori winery

Innovative Super Tuscans

While the majority of Tuscany's famous red wines (including Brunello and Chianti) must adhere to strict wine-making regulations, producers of the Super Tuscans (wines made using non-traditional grapes and methods) can be much more flexible, enabling them to push for new heights with each vintage. The bottles aren't cheap, but they're worth trying for the ultimate Tuscan wine experience. Many, including Sassicaia by Tenuta San Guido (the very first Super Tuscan) and Guado al Tasso by Antinori, are made in Bolgheri.

Inviting Wine Bars

Wine is the lifeblood of Tuscany, so you are never far from an establishment where you can relax with a bottle of the latest vintage. In Florence, Fratelli Zanobini is traditional and easy-going,

while the Chianti Classico consortium's contemporary Enoteca at Mercato Centrale offers guided tastings. In Chianti, enjoy a glass at a pavement-side table at Enoteca Baldi *(Piazza Bucciarelli 25, Panzano)*, and in San Gimignano try DiVinorum *(Piazza Cisterna 30)*.

Classic Chianti

Chiantis are made across the region, but the most prestigious varieties are produced in the designated Chianti Classico area between Florence and Siena. Learn about – and try – the wines at the Casa del Chianti Classico *(Circonvallazione Santa Maria 18, Radda)*. It has an excellent multisensorial display, a bistro and a delightful wine bar.

Vernaccia di San Gimignano

Straw-coloured Vernaccia was Italy's first DOC certified wine, and has since been promoted to DOCG status (controlled and guaranteed designation of origin); its story is told at the multimedia La Rocca visitor centre *(Via della Rocca 1)*, in the higher part of San Gimignano. Discover the wine's fresh, almondy character with a tasting.

Insider Tip

A Window to Wine

Grab a glass to drink at a *buchette del vino* (wine windows). Used for social distancing during the 17th-century plague, some reopened since the COVID–19 pandemic.

TOP 5

Tuscan wineries

Il Borro
⌂ **San Giustino Valdarno**
A charming medieval village and estate.

Fattoria dei Barbi
⌂ **Montalcino**
Try the Brunello and visit the on-site museum.

Badia di Passignano
⌂ **Tavarnelle Val di Pesa**
Run by the prestigious Antinori family.

Castello di Brolio
⌂ **Gaiole in Chianti**
Wines have been made here since 1141.

Terre del Marchesato
⌂ **Bolgheri**
Tour the cellar and taste the Super Tuscans.

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR
VILLAS AND GARDENS

Tuscany is peppered with a multitude of impressively well-preserved historic villas. Built by wealthy families – including, of course, the Medici – and ranging in style from statuesque to austere to elaborate, almost all are surrounded by elegant formal gardens or beautifully landscaped parkland.

▲ Villa San Martino, Napoleon's country retreat while exiled on Elba

Napoleon's Elba Homes

During his exile on Elba, Napoleon enjoyed the run of two residences at Portoferraio: Villa dei Mulini, in a panoramic spot overlooking the sea, and Villa San Martino, in the countryside nearby. The latter is dominated by the grand mid-19th century Demidoff Gallery, housing a museum dedicated to Napoleon's memory.

Green Florence

For a peaceful respite from sightseeing in Florence, make your way to the city's wonderful parks and gardens. The historic gardens at Villa Bardini have stunning views over the city, while the elegant Boboli Gardens are part of the collective Medici villas and gardens World Heritage Site. There are charming rose and iris gardens off Piazzale Michelangelo, while Hotel AdAstra overlooks the lush Giardino Torrigiani, Europe's largest private urban garden.

The Medici Villas

One of the greatest legacies left by the Medici dynasty is the series of elegant villas and gardens that they built, bought or modified; of these, twelve villas and two gardens have been recognized collectively as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The fortress-like Villa di Cafaggiolo is one of the oldest, transformed for Cosimo Il Vecchio, while Poggio a Caiano was built for Lorenzo the Magnificent. The interior, which today hosts a still-life collection, also contains some marvellous frescoes.

TOP 5

VILLAS NEAR LUCCA

Villa Reale

⌂ **Marlia**

Once owned by Napoleon's sister.

Palazzo Pfanner

⌂ **Lucca**

The epitome of Baroque splendour.

Villa Torrigiani

⌂ **Camigliano**

Impressive Baroque villa and gardens.

Villa Mansi

⌂ **Capannori**

A decorative 16th-century home.

Villa Oliva

⌂ **San Pancrazio**

A striking building with an unusual loggia.

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR RELAXATION

With so much to see in Tuscany, it can be easy to overdo things by cramming too much into a stay. Make sure to plan in some down time, and restore your energy away from the bustling tourist centres. From natural spas to sunset cruises, Tuscany has an infinite variety of ways to wind down.

▲ SUP-yoga in the lush surroundings of Canyon Park

Yoga and Meditation

The relaxed pace of Tuscan life lends itself perfectly to the many yoga and meditation retreats on offer (*bookyogaretreats.com*). Summer yoga sessions at the beach are growing in popularity, many of which are combined with stand-up paddleboarding (SUP). Canyon Park near Bagni di Lucca offers yoga and SUP-yoga in a gorgeous woodland context (*canyonpark.it*).

Boat Rides

Feel the refreshing effects of the sea air on a boat trip along the Tuscan coast; departure points include Porto Santo Stefano and

Portoferraio on Elba. The Centro Ricerca Cetacei (*centroricercacetacei.org*) organizes day trips from Elba to help monitor dolphins and whales in the International Cetacean Sanctuary, which stretches from Tuscany to France.

Spa Time

Follow in the footsteps of the ancient Etruscans and enjoy the revitalizing waters of Tuscany's thermal springs. In addition to high-end luxury resorts, there are also free spa-water pools at Cascate del Mulino (see Saturnia). Montecatini Terme is the longest established spa centre, and offers numerous treatments and wellness experiences.

Get Up Early

Start the day on the right foot with an early morning, crowd-free stroll through Tuscany's stunning piazzas. Dawn concerts by the sea or in the surroundings of archaeological areas are sometimes organized in summer – events vary, so look out for listings.

New Experiences

Detach from everyday life by trying something new. Get a fresh perspective on the Tuscan countryside from a hot-air balloon (*tuscanyballooning.it*), or learn some classic and contemporary Italian recipes in a bespoke cookery class. Many wineries offer grape harvest experiences, including Il Borro.

TOP 5

SEASIDE SUNSETS

Orbetello
The lagoon, with its picturesque windmill, is simply stunning.

Terrazza Mascagni, Livorno
A popular viewpoint at sundown.

Elba
Unbeatable sunsets can be found at Viticcio and Marciana Marina.

The Versilia
Perfectly placed beach bars line the coast.

Monte Argentario
Ideal for a romantic sunset cruise.

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR
OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

Wherever you are in Tuscany, there are countless reasons to venture into the great outdoors. Be it walking, cycling, horse-riding or paddling, go at your own pace and embrace the joys of exploring the region's stunning scenery.

▲ A relaxing cycle through the Tuscan countryside

Pedal Power

Cycling has always been a popular activity in Tuscany, but recently it has become even more accessible with the creation of clearly marked routes and web apps for road cyclists and mountain-bikers. There are plenty of hire shops throughout the region, which often stock e-bikes for those who require a little assistance with going further, higher or faster. The tracks through the attractive vineyards of Chianti are ideal for exploring by bicycle, and the major cities all have bike-sharing schemes.

Wonderful Walking Trails

From urban trekking to hikes through stunning natural areas, there are exceptional walking opportunities for every ability level. Long-distance routes include the Via Francigena and the Anello del Rinascimento, while near Pitigliano you can traverse the Etruscan Vie Cave, a curious network of paths carved into rock.

Invigorating Watersports

A top diving destination, Elba is also good for surface sports such as kitesurfing and windsurfing – as is Talamone near Orbetello. The rocky coastline of Monte Argentario is ideal for kayakers and boats of all kinds are easily hired. Inland, Lago di Bilancino also offers an array of watersports.

Horse-Riding Experiences

Tuscany has a good network of bridle paths and farms offering accommodation and stable facilities. The region's many stables – including those at San Rossore Park and Il Borro – offer tuition and guided excursions, ranging from an hour to several days. In Maremma you can saddle up and join the *butteri* (Tuscan cowboys) for a morning on the Alberese estate *(alberese.com)*.

Did You Know?

Tuscany has a handful of ski resorts, including Abetone in the heart of the Pistola mountains in Apennines.

TOP 5

Golf Courses

Poggio dei Medici
⌂ **Scarperia**
An award-winning 18-hole course.

Argentario Golf Resort
⌂ **Porto Ercole**
A stylish spa resort with 18 panoramic holes.

Golf Club Castelfalfi
⌂ **Montaione**
A 27-hole course and wine estate.

Golf Ugolino
⌂ **Impruneta**
An 18-hole course founded in 1934.

Golf Club Punta Ala
⌂ **Punta Ala**
A splendid 18-hole course with sea views.

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY
ON A BUDGET

Although there are many luxurious options on offer, a holiday in Tuscany need not break the bank. Beautiful beaches, majestic churches and relaxing spa pools can all be enjoyed for free, and with a bit of inside knowledge you can make the most of a limited budget when drinking and dining out.

▲ Bathing in the balmy spa waters at the rock pools of Cascate del Mulino

Make Your Money go Further

At the seaside, opt for a free beach *(spiaggia libera)* to avoid costly lounger and umbrella hire at lidos; you can still use the lido bar. For a totally free spa experience, seek out natural spa-water pools, such as Cascate del Mulino near Saturnia, which is accessible to the public all year round. Apart from the glamorous coastal resorts, costs are generally lower in the southern half of Tuscany – Siena is usually cheaper than Florence, for example – and in more remote areas, such as Mugello, where tourists are rarer. Churches across the region – except the most famous monumental ones – often house artistic treasures that can be viewed without an admission charge.

Discount Drinks

Cafés – particularly those in prime positions – often charge for table service, so ask to stand at the bar like the locals. Drinking fountains are a free source of fresh water for filling bottles; just around the corner from Siena's Baptistry you can fill bottles for free at the Morandi grocery. In Florence's Piazza della Signoria, the water fountain dispenses both still and sparkling water. The house wines served at Tuscan trattorias are usually local, inexpensive and good.

Cheap Eats

Street food and picnics with supplies from markets or delis are good ways to enjoy local specialities at accessible prices. At restaurants, check menus for hidden costs: a cover charge *(coperto)* of €1–3 is normal, but avoid places adding a service charge. Look out for bars offering *apericena,* or happy hour, when drinks include a generous buffet.

Open-Air Sights

The streets and piazzas of Tuscany's towns and cities resemble vast open-air galleries, full of stunning examples of sculpture and architecture. This is especially true in Pietrasanta, where the Parco Internazionale delle Sculture displays 70 contemporary sculptures in public places. A fun and free way to see more of Siena is by seeking out the colourful *contrada* symbols in each of the 17 city districts.

Getting Around

Public transport can be surprisingly cheap – particularly buses, which are often the most convenient option for reaching hill towns (including Siena) where the railway station may be located far from the centre. Local *(regionale)* trains are inexpensive, but advance booking is essential for discounts on fast trains. Bike-sharing schemes are widely available – including in Florence, Pisa and Siena – sometimes for free.

Did You Know?

Hotel owners favour direct reservations and will match or better prices quoted by booking agencies.

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR MUSIC LOVERS

Summer is a special time for music lovers, as Tuscany comes alive with the strains of open-air festivals. Held in a variety of enchanting locations and ranging from large-scale events to small one-off concerts, there's a plethora of shows and genres to choose from.

▲ Musicians at the Lucca Summer Festival

Rock, Blues and Jazz

Pistoia Blues is a major international festival held in mid-July, with top rock, soul, jazz and blues artists on stage in Piazza Duomo. In Florence, the Firenze Rocks festival (mid-June) hosts some of the world's most famous rock bands at the Parco delle Cascine arena, and there are more big-name bands at the long-standing Lucca Summer Festival (June–July). The Barga Jazz Festival brings music to the town's streets and piazzas during August.

The Big One

Two months of open-air concerts and other arts performances make up the programme of the Estate Fiesolana (late June–mid-August), which has been held since 1947 in the historic hill town of Fiesole. The concerts range widely in terms of genre, from classical music to jazz – and a number of them can be enjoyed free of charge. Events

take place at a variety of venues; the best of all are those held under the stars in the atmospheric surroundings of the ancient Roman theatre high above town. Tickets include admission to the archaeological museum and there are extra post-show buses (number 7) back to Florence.

Opera and Classical

The work of Giacomo Puccini is celebrated every July and August with captivating lakeside performances at his home at Torre del Lago. In Florence, the Maggio Musicale festival (April–June) features performances of old and new classical works, while the Incontri in Terra di Siena chamber music festival (July) holds concerts in historic locations around Siena, including the magnificent La Foce estate.

Insider Tip

Sienese Jazz

Siena's Fortezza Medicea houses a high level jazz academy – enjoy the music wafting through the windows as you stroll past.

TOP 3

puccini operas

La Bohème

The tragic love story of poet Rodolfo and seamstress Mimi, who face the difficulties of poverty and ill health.

Tosca

Filled with passion and jealousy, this opera is set in Rome at the time of Napoleon’s invasion of Italy.

Madama Butterfly

The heartbreaking tale of a young Japanese girl who falls in love with an American naval officer.

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR **SHOPPERS**

With a rich tradition of local crafts and delicacies – from luxury fashion to tasty truffles – the range of goods is broad and the quality is high. There are few more pleasurable experiences than browsing the boutiques of Florence's medieval streets or buying artisanal produce directly from a rural farm estate.

▲ Delicious local produce for sale at a traditional grocer in Florence

Food and Wine

Take home a taste of Tuscany with one – or several – of the numerous tempting specialities found in every town and village. Many places provide vacuum-packing, and farms and wineries often have direct sales. Buy cheese in Pienza and truffles in San Miniato, and don't miss the Saturday morning Slow Food market in Montecatini Terme, which promotes high-quality traditional produce.

Arts and Crafts

Skilled artistry is a fundamental part of the local character in Tuscany's towns and villages, and centuries-old traditions are proudly upheld throughout the region. Colourfully decorated ceramics are made in many places, including Montelupo Fiorentino (near Empoli), where an international ceramics festival is held every June and July. Colle di Val d'Elsa is famous for its crystal

glass, Volterra specializes in artistic alabaster items and Arezzo is Italy's leading centre for goldsmiths. Florentines are masters of the craft of marbled paper, creating beautifully intricate designs.

Handmade Leather Goods

Tuscany's leather goods are famous throughout the world and Florence is a major centre for the industry. The Santa Croce leather school, Scuola del Cuoio, is a great place to see leathercrafters at work, and has a wonderful selection of unique, handmade items for sale. Housed in the monastery to the rear of the church, it was founded in 1950 by the friars and two family leather firms to teach skills to war orphans.

Florence Fashion

Many top designers hail from Florence – Italy's original fashion capital – including Salvatore Ferragamo and Gucci. Peruse their glamorous wares in the high-fashion hub around Via de' Tornabuoni and uncover the brands' histories at the Museo Ferragamo and the striking Gucci Garden.

Insider Tip

Personal Shopping

If time is short, hire a personal shopping service such as Florence Fashion Tour to help navigate your way through Tuscany's shopping opportunities (*florencefashiontour.com*).

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

Tuscany's cities can get rather busy, but it's easy to escape the masses: turn into a quiet side-street, stop in a village you've never heard of or explore one of the beautiful natural parks. Plan your visit outside of the busy Easter to October period, and interact with the locals away from the tourist crowds.

▲ The peaceful waters of Vagli lake, particularly enchanting at sunset

Gorgeous Garfagnana

This astonishing area of natural beauty hosts some striking sights, including the Eremo di Calomini hermitage built into a sheer rock face. Picturesque Vagli lake, meanwhile, hides an underwater village only in view on the rare occasions when the lake is dredged.

Wild Maremma

You can walk all day in solitude on the quiet footpaths of the vast and wild Parco Naturale della Maremma, which range greatly in terms of difficulty and length; guided tours of the park are available, including night walks in summer. The tranquil beaches and roads of the area are also ideal for a secluded excursion.

Etruscan Tuscany

Explore the fascinating Vie Cave and ancient Etruscan

archaeological areas near Pitigliano, Sorano and Sovana, in the southernmost part of the region, for an immersive insight into Tuscany's past. A multitude of burial chambers are hidden among the trees and the atmosphere is usually calm and peaceful.

The Hidden Side of the Cities

It's possible to find quiet areas even in Tuscany's most celebrated cities. In Florence, explore the side-streets around Santa Croce and Oltrarno, and in Siena, head towards the Porta Romana and Porta San Marco city gates to visit the characterful *contradas* (districts).

Magnificent Mugello

The towns and villages of Mugello don't feature on the main tourist routes, so are ideal for a unique Tuscan experience. Both house an assortment of interesting museums and excellent restaurants – drivers in the know often stop at Barberino for a good meal.

FLORENCE AND TUSCANY FOR
ARCHITECTURE

Medieval castles, decorative Romanesque cathedrals and elegant Renaissance palazzi: the region's monuments represent the whole spectrum of architectural styles. Marvel at the façades, walk the walls and scale the towers to get under the skin of historic Tuscany.

▲ The beautiful façade of Florence's Duomo, topped by Brunelleschi's famous dome

Religious Masterpieces

The sumptuous façades of Tuscany's many magnificent cathedrals are fitting preludes to the artistic treasures contained within. It's hard to miss the voluminous dome of Florence's vast and decorative cathedral (see Duomo and Baptistry), which can be glimpsed from numerous side-streets around the centre. A world-famous landmark designed by Brunelleschi, its construction marked a major breakthrough in architectural techniques. Siena's black-and-white striped cathedral also has an intricate façade, while the tiered colonnades of Pisa's striking Duomo are often unjustly ignored in favour of the Leaning Tower behind. And don't forget Lucca, Pistoia and Massa Marittima, all of which have similarly impressive cathedrals.

Priceless Piazzas

The life of any Italian community centres on the piazza. Tuscany's most celebrated examples include Siena's shell-shaped Piazza del Campo and Pisa's stunning Piazza del Duomo, but don't overlook lesser-known gems such as the perfectly oval Piazza dell'Anfiteatro in Lucca, the triangular Piazza Matteotti in Greve in Chianti and central Cortona's curious succession of squares. Florence's Piazza Santa Croce is the site of an annual Christmas market that begins in late November.

Tall Towers

Tuscany has an abundance of tall, narrow buildings – climb to the top for incredible panoramic views. Pisa's Leaning Tower is the most famous, but the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence is the highest. San Gimignano, meanwhile, has over a dozen striking tower houses.

Imposing Ramparts

A walk around the ramparts of Tuscany's towns and villages makes an alternative stroll and provides intriguing glimpses of otherwise hidden corners. Monteriggioni is the most striking walled village, while Lucca's wide Renaissance walls are nowadays a popular elevated park.

4 million

The number of bricks used to construct Brunelleschi's dome.

TOP 5

Tuscan Castles

Castello di Meleto

⌂ **Gaiole in Chianti**

A historic and striking 13th-century structure.

Castello di Poppi

⌂ **Poppi**

Features a curious internal courtyard.

Castello Malaspina

⌂ **Fosdinovo**

An imposing castle with panoramic views.

Castello di Poggio alle Mura

⌂ **Montalcino**

Houses a glass museum.

Castello di Brolio

⌂ **Gaiole in Chianti**

At the heart of the Ricasoli wine estate.

A YEAR IN
FLORENCE AND TUSCANY

January

La Befana *(6 Jan)*. Throughout Italy children receive stockings containing sweets and gifts from La Befana, the Epiphany witch.

△ **La Cavalcata dei Magi** *(6 Jan)*. A parade through Florence in Renaissance dress.

February

△ **Carnevale** *(Shrove Tuesday and preceding weekends)*. Viareggio’s carnival is one of Italy’s most famous, renowned for its sharply satirical floats; smaller carnival celebrations are also held elsewhere.

March

△ **Scoppio del Carro** *(Easter Sun)*. A celebration in Florence of the Resurrection; the “Explosion of the Carriage” involves a gilded cart and fireworks in Piazza Duomo.

Traditional New Year *(25 Mar)*. Pisa celebrates the traditional new year (abolished 1749) with several days of festivities, including Renaissance costume parades and fireworks; Florence puts on a simpler historical procession.

April

△ **Mostra Mercato Internazionale dell'Artigianato** *(last week)*. An important European exhibition of the work of artists and artisans held in Florence's Fortezza da Basso.

Festa degli Aquiloni *(first Sun after Easter)*. Traditional handmade kites are flown in San Miniato, and there's a parade with historical costumes.

Liberation Day *(25 Apr)*. A national holiday to commemorate the end of the Fascist regime.

May

Maggio Musicale *(May–Jun)*. Arts festival in Florence, including music, drama and dance.

△ **La Notte dei Pirati** *(first weekend)*. The night festival in Porto Ercole includes pirate raids, games, cannon fire and a treasure hunt.

June

△ **Calcio Storico** *(24 Jun)*. Florence’s violent football match in Renaissance costume.

Gioco del Ponte *(last Sat)*. A ritual battle played out on the Ponte di Mezzo bridge in Pisa.

July

Palio di Siena *(2 Jul & 16 Aug)*. A medieval bareback horse race between 10 of Siena’s 17 *contradas* (districts).

△ **Pistoia Blues Festival** *(mid-Jul)*. Famous international festival in Pistoia, with five days of blues and rock concerts.

Estate Fiesolana *(late Jun–mid-Aug)*. A long-standing arts festival in Fiesole, with events held in the ancient Roman theatre.

August

Puccini Festival *(late Jul–all Aug)*. Performances of the composer’s operas in an open-air theatre by his home at Torre del Lago.

Fish and Chips Festival *(first-half Aug)*. An event with food and dancing in celebration of the historical links between Barga and Scotland.

△ **Bravio delle Botti** *(last Sun)*. A race between representatives of Montepulciano’s eight districts, who roll 80 kg (175 lb) barrels uphill.

Calici di Stelle *(10 Aug)*. Open-air wine-tasting and star-gazing in various locations.

September

Fiera del Cacio *(first week)*. A week of cheese-tasting and market stalls in Pienza, culminating with a Sunday afternoon bowls-like competition using Pienza cheeses.

△ **Palio della Balestra** *(second Sun)*. Renaissance costume parade and flag-throwing in Sansepolcro.

October

Florence Queer Festival *(mid-Oct)*. International LGBTQ+ event celebrating queer culture through film, video, theatre, photography and literature.

△ **L'Eroica** *(first Sun)*. A non-competitive cycle race in Gaiole, for which participants wear historical dress and ride vintage bicycles.

November

△ **Florence Marathon** *(last Sun)*. Established in 1984, the Florence Marathon sees thousands of runners racing through the historical town centre (a mercifully flat route) on the final Sunday of the month.

December

△ **Mercatino di Natale** *(first three weeks)*. A Christmas market held in Piazza Santa Croce in Florence, selling decorations, gifts and festive specialities, and featuring Santa's grotto and an area dedicated to quality crafts.

A BRIEF
HISTORY

▲ A map of Tuscany from 1814.

Tuscans are renowned for their strong character, and feuds have been common throughout the region’s history. But the area is also a centre of arts and culture; Florence led artistic development during the Renaissance.

Ancient Tuscany

The ancient Etruscan civilization – from which the name Tuscany derives – was already established by the 8th century BCE. It covered an area known as Etruria, which spanned Tuscany as well as the regions of Lazio and Umbria. The Etruscans founded a number of towns including Cortona, Arezzo, Fiesole and Volterra (the latter of which is home to an Etruscan acropolis). After multiple wars with Rome in the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE, Etruria was conquered and renamed Tuscia. With the rise of Roman culture came the construction of new roads, including the panoramic Via Aurelia coastal road from Pisa to Rome, and new towns such as Florence and Siena.

Medieval Tuscany

Tuscany was attacked multiple times in the early medieval era by northern tribes such as the Goths and the Lombards. The Frankish king, Charlemagne, in response to a request from Pope Leo II, drove the Lombards out of Tuscany and was rewarded by being crowned the first Holy Roman Emperor in 800 CE. The Church played a significant role in the area during this period and numerous religious buildings were constructed. The region underwent considerable urbanization until the advent of the Black Death in 1348. Gothic and Romanesque architectural styles became popular, including the particularly decorative Pisan Romanesque style, and Tuscany's many complex medieval town and village centres were built, with their narrow alleys, robust surrounding walls, and castles and towers.

Merchants' guilds gained increasing influence throughout the region. The wool merchants were particularly powerful in Florence, which led to the Tuscan city becoming Italy's foremost centre for textiles and fashion; it is still a leader in those industries today.

Renaissance Tuscany and the Medici Family

The Renaissance was the most creative period of Tuscany's history, with the region leading the world in artistic and intellectual development. This was due largely to the patronage of the Medici family, who governed Florence (and later Tuscany) from 1434 to 1737. The Medici wealth was the legacy of astute merchant banker Giovanni di Bicci, father of the first Medici ruler, Cosimo il Vecchio. The long period of relatively peaceful Medici governance had a brief interruption from 1494 to 1530 when the city of Florence was run as a republic, before the family dynasty was restored by the Medici Pope Clement VII.

The Grand Duchy and Florence as Capital

By 1570 the Medici rulers of Florence had added the rest of Tuscany to their territories, and Cosimo I was officially declared the first Grand Duke of Tuscany. A lengthy period of prosperity and political unity followed, and the region became a popular destination for wealthy aristocrats conducting a Grand Tour of Europe. When the Medici line eventually came to an end with the death of Gian Gastone in 1737, the Grand Duchy was inherited by the Austrian Dukes of Lorraine, which continued until Italian

unification in 1860. Florence played an important role in the new kingdom of Italy, even serving as the nation's capital from 1865 to 1871, before Rome joined the unified nation and took the helm.

The Modern Era

The 20th century was a turbulent time for Tuscany, with the interwar period bringing social unrest, the rise of Fascism and economic recession. The region suffered heavy bomb damage during World War II, including the destruction of all but one of Florence's historic bridges, and severe floods in 1966 damaged many of Florence's art treasures. Nonetheless, Tuscany flourished as a major cultural centre and its textiles and agricultural industries continued to thrive. Today, tourism plays a fundamental role in the local economy, and Tuscany leads the way in Italy for protecting its historic centres from pollution by restricting traffic. In recent years, over tourism has been a challenge in the city, with increasing numbers of residents being priced out of the centre and local shops being replaced by tourist traps. Tighter controls on short-term lets are being put in place to prevent this.

Did You Know?

Tuscany's unusual salt-free bread was born out of a 12th-century dispute between Pisa and Florence.

Did You Know?

The piano was invented in Tuscany by Italian maker Bartolomeo Cristofori in around 1700.

NEW YEAR

Although Tuscans mark 1 January with characteristic gusto, both Florence and Pisa continue to celebrate their own New Year on 25 March, coinciding with the Feast of the Annunciation.

Timeline of events

9th century BCE

Etruscan civilization flourishes on Elba.

294 BCE

The Romans defeat the Etruscans and conquer Roselle.

59 BCE

Florence is founded to house veterans of the Roman army.

20 BCE

Siena is founded as a military colony.

c 1025

Guido d’Arezzo invents the first system of musical notation.

1265

Poet Dante Alighieri is born in Florence.

1301

Dante is exiled from Florence, never to return.

1350

The Leaning Tower of Pisa is completed, already leaning.

1472

Monte dei Paschi di Siena, the world's oldest operational bank, is founded.

c 1485

Leonardo da Vinci designs his first flying machine.

1504

Michelangelo completes his *David* statue.

1633

The first Siena Palio is held.

1749

Florence and Pisa are obliged to adopt the Gregorian calendar.

1786

Tuscany becomes the first state in the world to abolish the death penalty.

1814–15

Napoleon is exiled on Elba.

1865–71

Florence has a short spell as capital of Italy.

1951

Italy's first fashion show is held in Florence.

2019

Vase of Flowers by Dutch artist Jan van Huysum is returned to the Uffizi Gallery after being stolen over 75 years before by German soldiers.

◀ Contents

EXPERIENCE FLORENCE

▲ The Ponte Vecchio at sunset

Explore Florence

Around the Duomo

Around Santa Croce

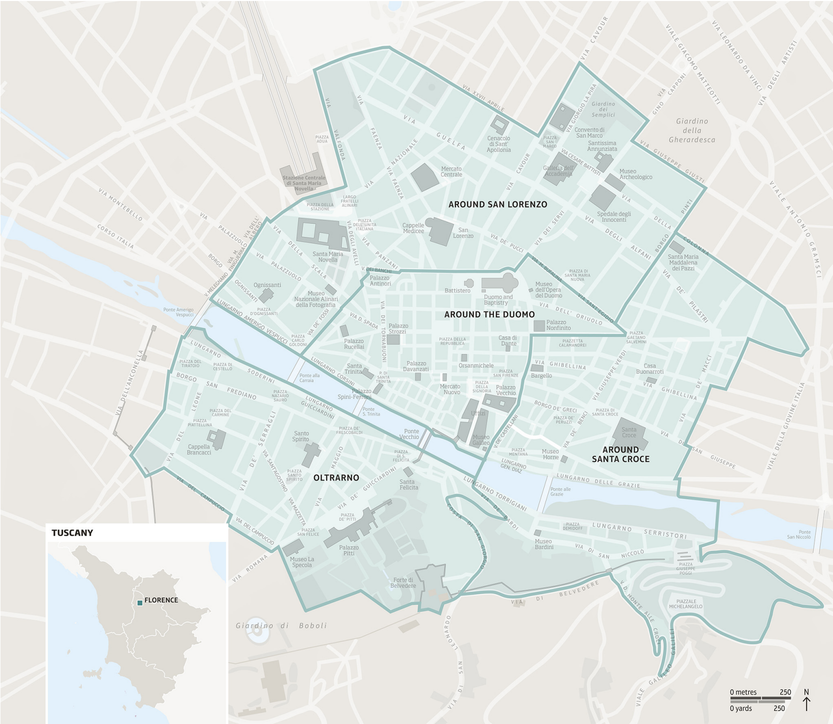
Around San Lorenzo

Oltrarno

◀ Experience Florence ◀ Contents

EXPLORE
FLORENCE

The heart of Florence centres on the cluster of world-famous sights around the Duomo. Bustling San Lorenzo lies to the north, while to the east is the more relaxed neighbourhood of Santa Croce. The River Arno acts as a natural boundary, separating the city centre from the Oltrarno artisan district.



n This guide divides Florence into four areas, as shown on this map. Find out more about each area on the following pages.

Around the Duomo

Visiting students mingle with sightseers at the cafés and wine bars surrounding the area's magnificent monuments, while sharp dressers strut through the high-fashion district around Via de' Tornabuoni. Santa Trinita bridge is a favourite spot among romantic young couples, who linger over the sunset views.

Best for *Masterpieces of art and architecture*

Home to *Duomo and Baptistry, the Uffizi, Piazza della Signoria, Ponte Vecchio*

Experience *A climb up the Duomo for stunning city views*

Go To: AROUND THE DUOMO ►

▲ The striking colours of the Duomo

Around Santa Croce

Bar owners and leisurely locals enjoy a less hectic pace of life in Santa Croce and Sant'Ambrogio, away from the hubbub of sightseers. The early morning market at Sant'Ambrogio features a slice of everyday life, while ceramics and leather shops offer beautiful souvenirs.

Best for *Iconic views of the city*

Home to *Santa Croce, Bargello, Piazzale Michelangelo*

Experience *Shopping for leather goods at Scuola del Cuoio*

Go To: AROUND SANTA CROCE ►

▲ Exquisite view of Florence from Giotto's Campanile in winter

Around San Lorenzo

Close to the city's transport hub, Piazza Santa Maria Novella is the realm of suitcase-pulling travellers, either hurrying towards the station or gazing in wonder at the stunning church façade that greets them on arrival. The austere buildings and busy bus routes around San Marco and the Accademia are less conducive to lingering, while the frenetic life of the Mercato Centrale brings families and restaurant chefs shoulder to shoulder in search of the freshest produce.

Best for *Market-fresh food at the Mercato Centrale*

Home to *San Lorenzo, San Marco, Santa Maria Novella*

Experience *A cookery lesson at the Mercato Centrale*

Go To: AROUND SAN LORENZO ►

▲ Shoppers at the San Lorenzo flea market

Oltrarno

As soon as you cross the river to the Oltrarno (literally "beyond the Arno") the atmosphere changes. Modest buildings housing age-old artisans' workshops, where aproned experts work with wood, glass or silver, are interspersed with bohemian student bars, contemporary literary cafés and experimental restaurants designed to stimulate the appetites of Florence's young professionals. The bars on Piazza Santo Spirito overflow at aperitivo time, with locals gathering before a meal of home-cooked food like nonna used to make at one of the area's simple, old-fashioned trattorias.

Best for *Artisan workshops, offbeat bars and traditional trattorias*

Home to *Palazzo Pitti, Boboli Gardens, Brancacci Chapel*

Experience *Sipping an aperitivo in Piazza Santo Spirito*

Go To: OLTRARNO ►

▲ Brightly painted buildings at Costa di San Giorgio Street, Oltrarno

Around the Duomo

▲ The Duomo’s enormous dome and Campanile towering over Florence’s skyline

Introduction

Area Map

Must See

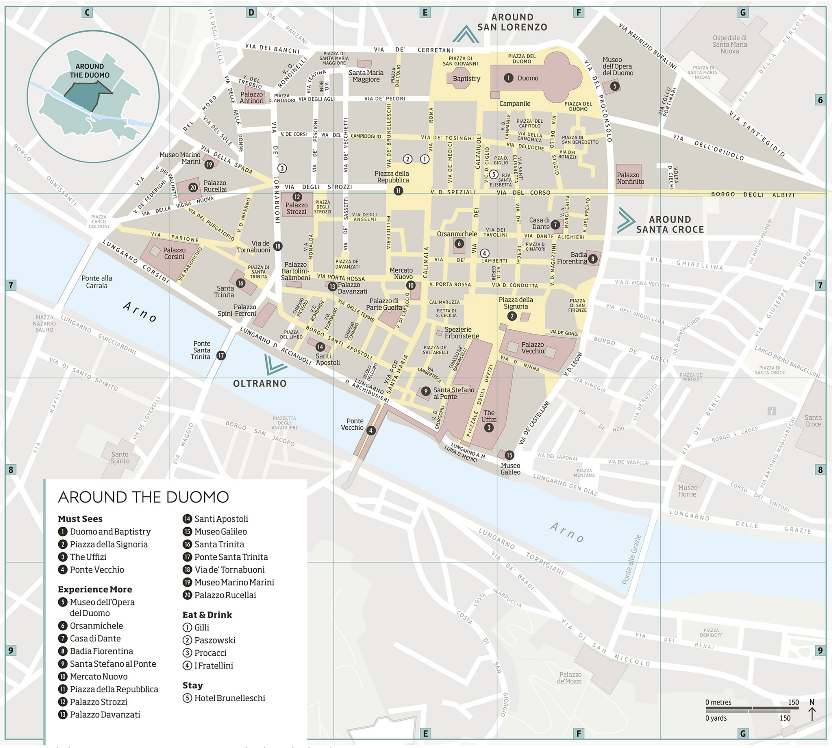
Experience More

A Short Walk - AROUND THE DUOMO

The heart of Florence, this area has been the home of religious and political life – the Duomo and the Palazzo Vecchio respectively – since the 14th century. Previously known as Palazzo della Signoria, the Palazzo Vecchio was the residence of the Medici family until their mid-16th century move to Palazzo Pitti. They retained a close connection to the area, however, via an impressive covered corridor that passed through the Uffizi and over the Ponte Vecchio to link the two palaces. The Palazzo Vecchio later housed the Italian parliament for the brief period that Florence was Italy's capital (1865–71) and still functions as the town hall today.

Piazza della Repubblica and the surrounding streets are the result of 19th-century redevelopment; the piazza housed the city's main market in medieval times and before that the Roman forum. As Florence's reputation as a fashion capital became established in the 20th century, Via de' Tornabuoni – the most elegant of the city's streets since the Renaissance – became a hub for top couturiers. It is still lined with designer boutiques today, and forms the heart of the city's main shopping district.

Area Map
AROUND THE DUOMO



n Double-tap image to read the labels

Must Sees

1 Duomo and Baptistry

2 Piazza della Signoria

3 The Uffizi

4 Ponte Vecchio

Experience More

5 Museo dell’Opera del Duomo

6 Orsanmichele

7 Casa di Dante

8 Badia Fiorentina

9 Santa Stefano al Ponte

10 Mercato Nuovo

11 Piazza della Repubblica

12 Palazzo Strozzi

13 Palazzo Davanzati

14 Santi Apostoli

15 Museo Galileo

16 Santa Trinita

17 Ponte Santa Trinita

18 Via de’ Tornabuoni

19 Museo Marino Marini

20 Palazzo Rucellai

Eat & Drink

1 Gilli

2 Paszowski

3 Procacci

4 I Fratellini

Stay

5 Hotel Brunelleschi

Google Map

1 "

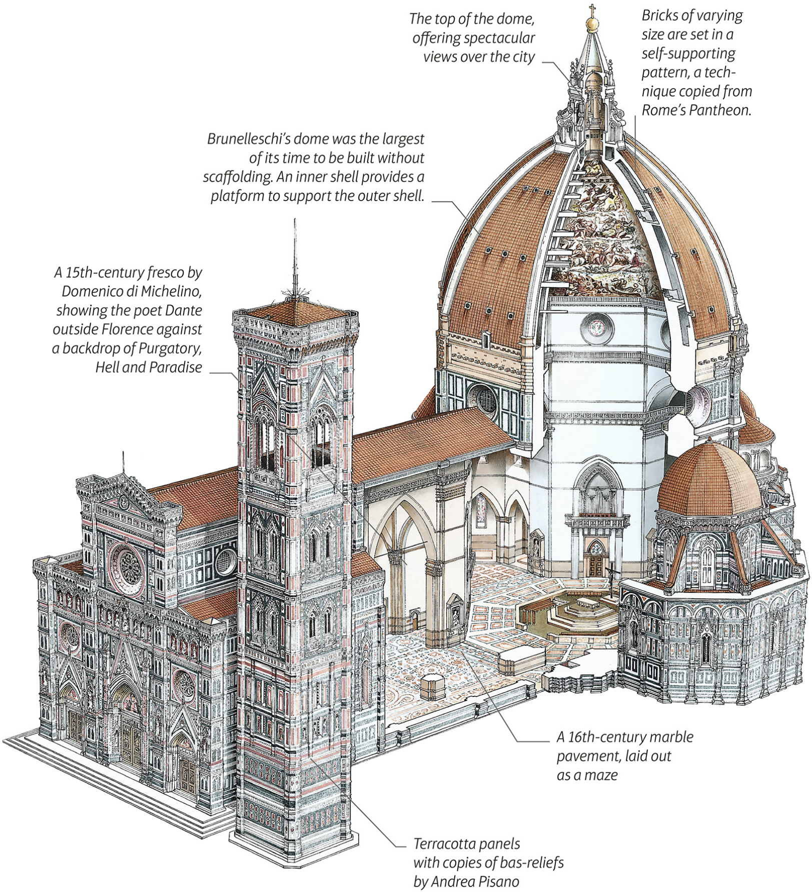
Duomo and Baptistry

E6–F6 ⌂ Piazza del Duomo @ C2, 6, 11,14 # Hours vary, check website ¢ 1 Jan & religious hols Σ ilgrandemuseodelduomo.it

Rising above the heart of the city, the richly decorated Duomo – Santa Maria del Fiore – and its orange-tiled dome have become Florence's most famous symbol.

Designed by architect Filippo Brunelleschi, the cathedral's enormous, double-shelled dome (the largest brick dome ever constructed) dominates Florence. Its sheer size was typical of Florentine determination to lead in all things and, to this day, no other building stands taller in the city. The Baptistry, with its celebrated doors, is one of Florence's oldest buildings, dating back to perhaps the 4th century. In his capacity as city architect, Giotto designed the Campanile in 1334; it was completed in 1359, 22 years after his death. The exterior features a colourful collection of marble panels in shades of green and pink. The Duomo is free to enter, while tickets to other areas of the complex can be bought separately or in combination with each other.

▲ The Duomo's enormous dome and Campanile towering over Florence's skyline



▲ The Duomo, seen from the Piazza del Duomo

BAPTISTRY DOORS

Lorenzo Ghiberti won a competition in 1401 to design the north doors of the Baptistry. In 1425–52 he designed the east doors, which Michelangelo dubbed the "Gate of Paradise". The original ten relief panels are in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo; those on the Baptistry are copies.

Google Map

2

Piazza della Signoria

F7 @ C1 § Palazzo Vecchio: 055 276 83 25 # Palazzo Vecchio and Tower: 9am–2pm Thu, 9am–5pm Fri–Wed; Museum: 9am–2pm Thu, 9am–7pm Fri–Wed ¢ 25 Dec

This L-shaped square sits in the heart of the city, and is overlooked by some of Florence's most famous buildings. Most significant of all is the imposing Palazzo Vecchio, which has stood for centuries as the site of the town hall.

The piazza is a unique outdoor sculpture gallery and, with the Palazzo Vecchio, has been the hub of Florentine politics since the 14th century. Citizens gathered here when called to a *parlamento* (a public meeting) by the Palazzo's great bell. The statues, some copies, commemorate major events in the city's history. Many are linked to the rise and fall of the Florentine Republic, during which the religious leader Girolamo Savonarola was executed here.

Palazzo Vecchio

The Palazzo Vecchio ("Old Palace") still fulfils its original role as Florence's town hall. It was completed in 1322 when a huge bell – used to call citizens to meetings or warn of fire, flood or enemy attack – was hauled to the top of the 95-m- (311-ft-) high bell tower. The palazzo has retained its medieval appearance, but much of the interior was remodelled for Duke Cosimo I when he moved into the palace in 1540. Leonardo and Michelangelo were asked to redecorate the interior, but it was Vasari who finally undertook the work. His many frescoes (1563–5) glorify Cosimo and his creation of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

▲ The entrance courtyard

▲ Façade of the Palazzo Vecchio, in the Piazza della Signoria

GUCCI GARDEN

Housed in the imposing Palazzo della Mercanzia, the Florentine design giant's recently refurbished premises has a boutique stocking quirky one-offs and a stylish, contemporary restaurant run by triple-Michelin-starred chef Massimo Bottura. There is also a museum on-site, the galleries of which are lined with multimedia exhibitions dedicated to the history of the brand, including vintage advertising posters, garments and other items.

Did You Know?

Members of Florence's medieval government were chosen randomly every two months.

Google Map

3 " =

The Uffizi

E8 ⌂ Piazzale degli Uffizi 6 @ C1 # 8:15am–6:30pm Tue–Sun ¢ 1 Jan, 25 Dec Σ uffizi.it

Florence's best-known gallery draws larger crowds than any other art museum in Italy – once you make your way inside, you'll understand why.

▲ The museum's galleries line either side of the narrow Piazzale degli Uffizi

The Uffizi was built in 1560–80 as a suite of offices (*uffici*) for Duke Cosimo I's new administration. The architect Vasari used iron reinforcement to create an almost continuous wall of glass on the upper storey. From 1581, Cosimo's heirs used this well-lit space to display the Medici family art treasures, creating what is now the oldest gallery in the world packed with some of the greatest works of the Renaissance.

The collection was born from the immense wealth of the Medici family who commissioned pieces from many great Florentine masters. Francesco I was the first to house the family collection at the Uffizi, and his descendants added to it until 1737, when Anna Maria Ludovica, the last of the Medici, bequeathed it to the people of Florence (on the condition that it never leave the city). Though

the Renaissance collection is undoubtedly the highlight, the works on display reach into the 20th century.

The gallery's queues were notorious, but they can now be avoided by pre-booking through their website.

Exploring the Uffizi

The Renaissance galleries are undoubtedly the jewel in the Uffizi's crown, comprising the world's largest and most complete collection from this period. A growing understanding of geometry and perspective allowed artists of the time to create an illusion of space and depth in their works.

In room 8, two panels by Piero della Francesca (1410–92) depict the Duke and Duchess of Urbino on one side with representations of their virtues on the other. These were two of the first Renaissance portraits. In the same room, Fra Filippo Lippi's *Madonna and Child with Angels* (1455–66) is a masterpiece of warmth and humanity. Like so many Renaissance artists, Lippi uses a religious subject to celebrate earthly delights. The Botticelli paintings in rooms 10–14, meanwhile, are unmatched, and include *The Birth of Venus*, which still captivates viewers 600 years after it was painted. The museum also contains works attributed to the young Leonardo, such as the unfinished *Adoration of the Magi* (1481), while works by Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian are featured in the High Renaissance and Mannerist galleries.

In 2021, the gallery announced the "Uffizi Diffusi" initiative, which will see some of the Uffizi's artworks re-homed and displayed in regional galleries across Tuscany.

▲ Visitors wandering a gallery filled with sculptures and vast paintings.

Gallery Guide

The paintings are hung in a series of rooms to show the development of Florentine art from Gothic to Renaissance and beyond. The earliest works are on the second floor; start here to explore the collection in a broadly chronological order. Some familiar High Renaissance masterpieces, by artists such as Titian and Raphael, are hung on the first floor, and masters from other European countries are in rooms 46–55. To minimize queuing, book your ticket in advance.

Did You Know?

Botticelli was buried at the feet of his muse, Simonetta Vespucci, but her grave has since been moved.

Other Highlights

Gothic Art

Rooms 2 to 6 of the gallery are devoted to Tuscan Gothic art from the 12th to the 14th century. Giotto (1266–1337) introduced a degree of naturalism that was new in Tuscan art. The angels and saints in his *Ognissanti Madonna* (1310) express a broad range of human emotions. The throne in this painting and the temple in Lorenzetti's *Presentation in the Temple* (1342), in room 3, show a concern for three-dimensional depth quite at odds with the flatness of much Gothic art.

Giotto's naturalist influence extends throughout the works in room 4. One key example is the *Pietà* (1360–65) attributed to Giottino: look at the difference between the characters' expressions, their medieval – rather than biblical – style of dress and the blood, still fresh on the cross.

European Art

The works in room 45 show how the naturalism pursued by Northern European masters, such as Dürer (1471–1528) and Cranach (1472–1553), had a profound influence on Renaissance painters. Later Flemish paintings, including those by Rubens (1577–1640) and Van Dyck (1599–1641), are in room 55. Dutch paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries, including a number of Rembrandt self-portraits, are in room 49, while paintings by Spanish masters El Greco (1541–1624), Velázquez (1599–1660) and Goya (1746–1828) are exhibited in room 46.

Later Italian Paintings

Rooms 90 to 93 are dedicated to Caravaggio (1571–1610) and his legacy in the early 17th century. There are works by several of his followers, including Gerard van Honthorst (1592–1656), a Dutch artist renowned for his depictions of artificially lit scenes, and Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1656), a celebrated female painter perhaps best known for her brutal masterpiece *Judith Slaying Holofernes* (1611–12).

Sculptures

The ancient Roman sculptures displayed along the corridors and in room 56 were mainly collected by the Medici during the 15th century.

Their anatomical precision and faithful portraiture were much imitated by Renaissance artists, who saw themselves as giving rebirth to Classical perfection in art.

The Tribune

The octagonal tribune was designed in 1584 by Buontalenti so that Francesco I could display all his favourite works in one room. Notable paintings include Bronzino’s portrait (1545) of Eleonora di Toledo with her son, and the same artist’s portrait of Bia de’Medici, Cosimo I’s illegitimate daughter. It was painted just before her early death in 1542.

Google Map

4 =

Ponte Vecchio

E8 @ C1, C2, C3

This iconic medieval bridge spans the Arno at its narrowest point. Having withstood floods and wars since the 14th century, it remains a popular spot for visitors keen to sample its famous botteghe (workshops) and take in the breathtaking views along the river.

▲ The striking Ponte Vecchio, with its stone arches reflected in the Arno River

The Ponte Vecchio, or “Old Bridge” – indeed, the oldest bridge in Florence – was built in 1345. There have always been workshops on the bridge, but the butchers, tanners and blacksmiths who originally plied their trades here were evicted by Duke Ferdinando I in 1593 because of the noise and stench they created. The workshops were rebuilt and led to the more decorous – and sweet-smelling – goldsmiths. To this day, the shops lining and overhanging the bridge continue to specialize in new and antique jewellery. The Ponte Vecchio is due to undergo a major facelift, continuing in stages until summer 2026. It will still be possible to cross the bridge during this time.

▲ The bridge is usually packed with people, both tourists and locals alike, plus street perfomers who liven up the popular site.

THE VASARI CORRIDOR

The Corridoio Vasariano was built in 1565 by Giorgio Vasari and links the Palazzo Vecchio with the Palazzo Pitti, via the Uffizi. This private elevated walkway, also known as Percorso del Principe (“Prince’s Route”), allowed the Medici family to move between their residences without having to mix with the crowds on the street below. The corridor has been closed to the public since 2016 for refurbishment.

Did You Know?

The Ponte Vecchio escaped Nazi destruction, allegedly because Hitler himself ordered its survival.

Great View

On Ponte

One of the most romantic spots, there are few better places than the Ponte Vecchio view-point for enjoying Florence’s river vistas. While the bridge is being restored, the best views are from inside the Uffizi Galleries or the Ponte Santa Trinita.

Experience More

Google Map

5 " ' =

Museo dell’Opera del Duomo

F6 ⌂ Via della Canonica 1 # Hours vary, check website Σ ilgrandemuseodelduomo.it

▲ Admiring the statuary at the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo

This museum, spread across three floors and 25 rooms, offers an extraordinary experience for visitors. It chronicles the building of the Duomo, with an innovative layout and multimedia presentations that bring the sheer scale and ambition of the original project alive. The exhibits are given settings that imitate their original environments; relics from the Duomo and the Baptistry, for example, are displayed in a reconstructed octagonal chapel. There are some dazzling sculptural pieces on show. Donatello’s striking *La Maddalena* (1455) stands at the centre of one room, its starkness in marked contrast to the colourful artworks on the walls. Michelangelo’s next-to-last work of art, *Pietà* (1555), is here too; a remarkably personal masterpiece, it was abandoned and mutilated by Michelangelo when he found flaws in the marble. It was later acquired and pieced together by the Medici family.

The main attraction on the ground floor is the ancient façade of the Duomo, which was originally unfinished and dismantled in

1587. It has been re-created with the help of a 16th-century drawing. Many of the statues are placed in their original positions opposite the Baptistry doors.

On the first floor, a similar reconstruction has been carried out with the sculptures of the bell tower. These statues are life-sized, built to be seen from a distance, and illustrate Renaissance ideals about secular art. The mechanical obstacles faced by Brunelleschi when building the dome are explained in the Cupola hall. The room displays tools specifically invented for the dome's construction.

The last stop is the third-floor terrace, with its magnificent view of the Duomo. Be sure to pre-book online before visiting.

Stay

Hotel Brunelleschi

This unique hotel, part 15th-century tower, is furnished in opulent boutique style. Some rooms have views of Brunelleschi's dome.

 E6 ⌂ Piazza Santa Elisabetta Σ brunelleschihotelflorence.com

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 Google Map

6

Orsanmichele

 E7 ⌂ Via dell'Arte della Lana § 055 064 94 50 # 10:30am–6pm Tue–Sat ¢ Aug, 1 Jan, 1 May, 25 Dec

Orsanmichele was built in 1337 as a grain market, but was soon turned into a church. The open arcades became windows and, though these are now bricked in, the original Gothic tracery can still be seen. Niches on the outer walls each hold a statue of the patron saint of one of Florence's major *Arti* (guilds). The interior has two parallel naves. To the right is an extraordinary 1350s altar by Andrea Orcagna, covered in cherubs and carved reliefs and encrusted with coloured marble and glass. Within is Bernardo Daddi's *Virgin and Child* (1348), its frame beautifully carved with angels.

▲ The elaborate 14th-century altar in Orsanmichele, a masterpiece of Gothic style

 Google Map

7 "
Casa di Dante

 F7 ⌂ Via Santa Margherita 1 # Apr–Oct: 10am–6pm daily (Nov–Mar: to 5pm) Σ museocasadidante.it

According to local memory, famed poet Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) was born in this house. In 1911, the remains of a 13th-century tower house were restored to give the building its rambling appearance. Just a short stroll away is the 11th-century church of Santa Margherita de' Cerchi, where Dante is said to have first caught sight of Beatrice Portinari, whom he idolized in his poetry.

 Google Map

8
Badia Fiorentina

 F7 ⌂ Via del Proconsolo # 10am–6:30pm daily Σ badiafiorentina.org

▲ A view towards the Badia Fiorentina

This abbey, one of Florence's oldest churches, was founded in 978 by Willa, the widow of Count Uberto of Tuscany. Their son, Count Ugo, was buried inside the church in 1001. His splendid tomb was carved by Mino da Fiesole and dates from 1469–81. Filippino Lippi's *The Virgin Appearing to St Bernard* (1485) also enlivens an otherwise drab and solemn interior. The peaceful Chiostro degli Aranci ("cloister of the orange trees") is worth a visit, even though it is open only on Monday afternoons and is a little hard to find. Look for a door to the right of the altar. Sadly, the orange trees that the monks used to cultivate here are gone, but there are some lovely early frescoes and views of the hexagonal campanile, mentioned by Dante in the *Paradiso* section of *The Divine Comedy*.

Did You Know?

"Orsanmichele" is a corruption of Orto San Michele, the monastic kitchen garden once on this site.

Google Map

9

Santo Stefano al Ponte

E8 ⌂ Piazza di Santo Stefano, 5 # Hours vary, check website Σ cattedraledellimmagine.com

St Stephen “by the bridge”, dating from 969, is so called because of its close proximity to the Ponte Vecchio. The Romanesque façade, dating from 1233, is its most important architectural feature. Now deconsecrated, the church today hosts orchestral concerts and international art exhibitions.

Google Map

10

Mercato Nuovo

E7 # 9am–6:30pm daily ¢ 1 Jan, 25 & 26 Dec

The New Market is often referred to as the Mercato del Porcellino, after its little fountain featuring a bronze boar (*porcellino* means “piggy”). It is also sometimes called the “Straw Market” because goods woven out of straw, such as hats and baskets, were sold here from the end of the 19th century until the 1960s. The market was originally built in 1547–51 as a central market for silk and other luxury goods. Today’s stallholders sell leather goods and souvenirs, and on summer evenings buskers gather to entertain visitors.

Insider Tip

Todo Modo

Head to this classic bookshop and café where you can peruse shelves brimming with over 30,000 titles in Italian and English. A small theatre hosts events, readings and workshops *(Via dei Fossi 15R)*.

Google Map

11

Piazza della Repubblica

E6

▲ Antique carousel in the Piazza della Repubblica

Until 1890, when the present square was laid out, this was the site of the Mercato Vecchio (Old Market) and before that, of the ancient Roman forum. A single column from the old market remains, topped by an 18th-century statue of Abundance. Dominating the western side is a triumphal arch, known as the Arcone, built in 1895 as part of the city's redevelopment plans.

The popular square is lined with cafés. In the early part of the 20th century, the Giubbe Rosse – so called because of the red jackets of the waiters – was the haunt of writers and artists, including those of Italy's avant-garde Futurist movement.

 Google Map

12 "

Palazzo Strozzi

 D7 ⌂ Piazza Strozzi # 10am–8pm Mon–Fri (to 11pm Thu) Σ palazzostrozzi.org

Awesome for its sheer size, the Strozzi Palace was commissioned in the 15th century by the banker Filippo Strozzi who, having made a fortune in Naples, returned to Florence with one aim: to build a palace that was bigger and more magnificent than that of his great rivals, the Medicis. To this end he bought up and demolished 15 buildings around his existing home, and in 1489 the first stone was

laid. Two years later Strozzi was dead, leaving his heirs struggling with the massive costs necessary to complete his grandiose vision.

Completed, eventually, in 1536, the palace is massive. While it is only three storeys high, each floor is as tall as a normal palazzo. The exterior is built of huge rusticated masonry blocks; look out for the original Renaissance torch-holders, lamps and rings for tethering horses which adorn the corners and façades.

The palace is now a major cultural venue, regularly hosting world-class exhibitions of art and antiquities. Opening times can vary, and when there are no exhibitions in progress, only the courtyard is open.

▲ Visitors inside the incredibly vast Palazzo Strozzi

Did You Know?

Filippo Strozzi called in astrologers to divine

the best day on which to lay the foundation stone of his palazzo.

Google Map

13
Palazzo Davanzati

D7 ⌂ Via Porta Rossa 13 # Hours vary, check website Σ bargellomusei.beniculturali.it

The Palazzo Davanzati is preserved as a typical house of wealthy Florentines of the 14th century. The entrance courtyard was designed to repel intruders; you can spot holes in the vaulted ceiling that were used for dropping missiles. In the more peaceful inner courtyard, a staircase links all the floors. In one corner is a well and an ingenious pulley system to raise buckets of water to each floor – quite a luxury when most households of the time had to fetch all their water from a public fountain. The Salone Madornale, where large gatherings would have been held, and the Sala dei Pappagalli (Parrots Room), with its frescoes and rich tapestries, are also very impressive.

Google Map

14
Santi Apostoli

D7 ⌂ Piazza del Limbo § 055 802 35 68 # 9:30am–noon, 4–7pm Tue–Sun

The little church of the Holy Apostles is, with the Baptistry, among the oldest surviving churches in Florence. Many Florentines believe that the church was founded in 800 CE by the first Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne, but historians think it more likely dates to 1059–1100. The church has a simple Romanesque façade and the basilican plan typical of early Christian churches, but with 16th-century side aisles.

Google Map

15 "
Museo Galileo

F8 ⌂ Piazza dei Giudici 1 § 055 26 53 11 # 9:30am–6pm Wed–Mon,

9am–1pm Tue ¢ 1 Jan, 25 Dec

This small museum is something of a shrine to the Pisa-born scientist Galileo Galilei (1564–1642). Exhibits include his telescopes and the lens he used to discover the largest moons of Jupiter. There are large-scale reconstructions of his experiments into motion, weight, velocity and acceleration, sometimes demonstrated by the attendants.

In 1657, in memory of Galileo, Florence founded the world's first ever scientific institution, the Accademia del Cimento (Academy for Experimentation). Some of the academy's inventions, such as early thermometers, hygrometers and barometers, are on show here.

Also look out for the 1554 map of the world created by Portuguese cartographer Lopo Homem, and the nautical instruments invented by Sir Robert Dudley, the Elizabethan marine engineer employed by Medici dukes to build the harbour at Livorno.

▲ Sixteenth-century armillary sphere at the Museo Galileo

Google Map

16
Santa Trinita

D7 ⌂ Piazza di Santa Trinita § 055 21 69 12 # 8am–noon & 4–6pm Mon–Sat, 4–6pm Sun & hols

The original church here, built in the second half of the 11th century by the Vallombrosan monastic order, was very plain – a reflection of the austerity of an order that was founded in Florence in 1092 to restore the simplicity of monastic rule. Gradually, the building became more ornate, with a Baroque façade added in 1593.

Ghirlandaio’s frescoes in the Sassetti Chapel (right of the High

Altar) show what the church looked like in 1483–6. In one scene, St Francis of Assisi performs a miracle in the Piazza di Santa Trinita, with the church and the Palazzo Spini-Ferroni in the background. The donors of the chapel, Francesco Sassetti and his wife Nera Corsi, are portrayed on either side of the altar. Sassetti, who was general manager of the Medici bank, is shown with his son, Teodoro, and with Lorenzo de'Medici to his right, along with Antonio Pucci. Lorenzo's sons are climbing steps with their tutors. The altar painting, *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (1485), is also by Ghirlandaio; he is the first, dark-haired shepherd. The black sarcophagi of Sassetti and his wife are by Giuliano da Sangallo.

▲ Frescoes in the Sassetti Chapel, within the church of Santa Trinita

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Google Map

17

Ponte Santa Trinita

D7 ⌂ Piazza di Santa Trinita

▲ The Ponte Santa Trinita with its graceful curves, attributed to Michelangelo

Just south of Piazza Santa Trinita is what is considered to be Florence’s most beautiful bridge, the Ponte Santa Trinita. It affords fine views of the surrounding hills. Originally built in wood in 1252, it was rebuilt by Ammannati in 1567 as a monument to Cosimo I’s defeat of Siena. Michelangelo is credited with the elegant design, based on an intriguing elliptical curve echoing those on the famous Medici tombs (see San Lorenzo). The statues of the Four Seasons at each end were added in 1608 for Cosimo II’s marriage to Maria of Austria. The bridge was restored after it was destroyed by the Germans in 1944, and the statues were dredged up from the river bed.

Look west from here to the spectacular golden-yellow Palazzo Corsini (1648–56), with statues on the roof balustrade. It is one of the finest examples of Baroque architecture in Florence.

Google Map

18

Via de’ Tornabuoni

D7

This elegant street, running from Piazza degli Antinori to the Santa Trinita bridge, has been the city’s most refined ever since the Renaissance, when leading families built their palazzi here. Nowadays this and several of the surrounding streets, especially Via della Vigna Nuova, are lined with high-fashion stores.

The Salvatore Ferragamo flagship store and museum occupies the imposing Palazzo Spini Feroni. The brand originated in Florence, as did Gucci, Roberto Cavalli, Enrico Coveri and Emilio Pucci, as well

as the more recent Patrizia Pepe and Ermanno Scervino. Florence was the nation’s fashion capital for centuries, long before Milan.

Hidden Gem

Museo Ferragamo

Fans of shoe designer Salvatore Ferragamo will adore this exquisite collection of his shoes, made for such stars as Marilyn Monroe and Sophia Loren. It’s inside the Ferragamo store on Via de’ Tornabuoni.

Google Map

19 " '

Museo Marino Marini

D6 ⌂ Piazza San Pancrazio § 055 21 94 32 # 10am–1pm Tue & Thu, 10am–7pm Sat–Mon ¢ Public hols Σ museomarinomarini.it

The former church of San Pancrazio is now a museum devoted to the work of Italy’s best-known abstract artist, Marino Marini (1901–80). Marini was born in Pistoia, where more of his work can be seen in the Palazzo del Comune and in the Centro Marino Marini (see Pistoia). Marini studied art in Florence before moving on to teaching in Monza and in Milan. He sought to reinterpret Etruscan and medieval art forms and is noted for elemental bronzes, on the theme of horse and rider.

▲ An abstract equestrian figure at the Museo Marino Marini

Google Map

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Palazzo Rucellai

D6 ⌂ Via della Vigna Nuova 18

Built in 1446–51, this is one of the most ornate Renaissance palaces in the city. It was commissioned by Giovanni Rucellai, whose wealth derived from the family business, the import of a rare and costly red dye made from a lichen found only on Majorca. The dye was called *oricello*, from which the name Rucellai is derived.

The architect Leon Battista Alberti, designed the palace almost as a textbook illustration of the major Classical orders. In ascending order of complexity, the pilaster strips on the ground floor are Doric, those above are Ionic and those on the top floor are Corinthian. Two symbols are carved into the entablature: the

Rucellai’s billowing sails of Fortune and the ring symbol of Lorenzo de’Medici – a reminder that Bernardo Rucellai formed an alliance with the Medici in the 1460s by marrying Lorenzo’s sister, Lucrezia.

Eat & Drink

Gilli

A historic café serving delicious cakes.

E6 ⌂ Via Roma 1R Σ caffegilli.com

Paszkowski

Opened in 1846, this glamorous café hosts daily concerts.

E6 ⌂ Piazza della Repubblica 35R Σ caffepaszkowski.com

Procacci

A deli-wine bar famed for its truffle specialities.

D6 ⌂ Via de' Tornabuoni 64R Σ procacci1885.it

I Fratellini

This tiny establishment is a classic stop for a quick glass or a panino.

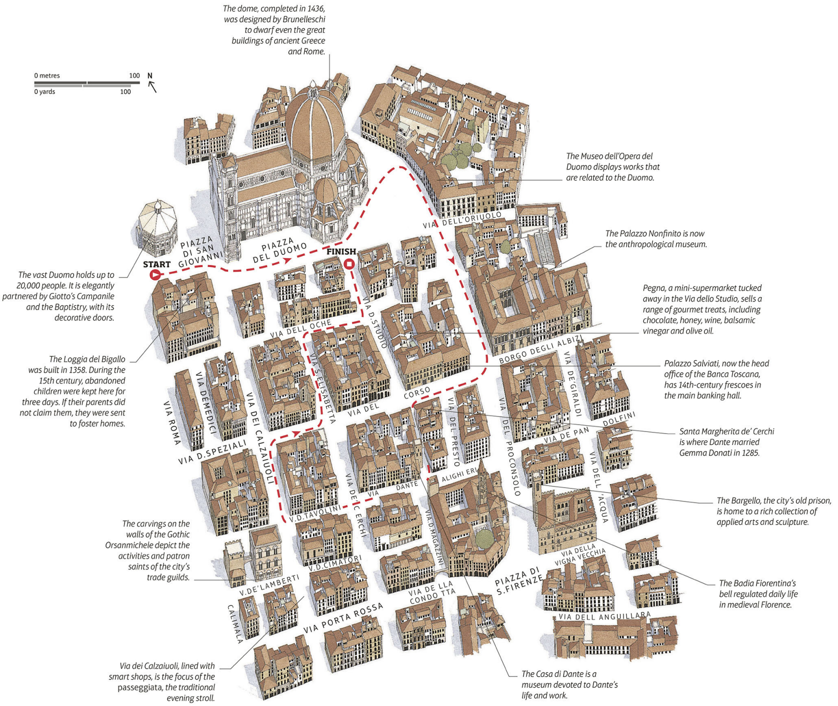
E7 ⌂ Via dei Cimatori 38R Σ iduefratellini.it

A short walk

Around the Duomo

n **Locator Map** (for more detail see Area Map)

Much of Florence was rebuilt during the Renaissance, but the eastern part of the city retains a distinctly medieval feel. A lot of what you can see on a stroll through the maze of tiny alleyways and hidden lanes would still be recognizable to Dante. His house, the Casa di Dante, still stands near the parish church where he first glimpsed his beloved, Beatrice Portinari. He would also recognize the Bargello and, of course, the Baptistry. One of the oldest streets is the Borgo degli Albizi. Now lined with Renaissance palaces, it follows the line of the ancient Roman road to Rome.



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Distance 1 km (0.5 miles)

Nearest bus stop Olio

Time 15 minutes

Did You Know?

Donatello designed one of the stunning stained-glass windows in the cathedral dome.

AROUND SANTA CROCE

▲ Cityscape as seen from the Piazzale Michelangelo's renowned viewpoint

Introduction

Area Map

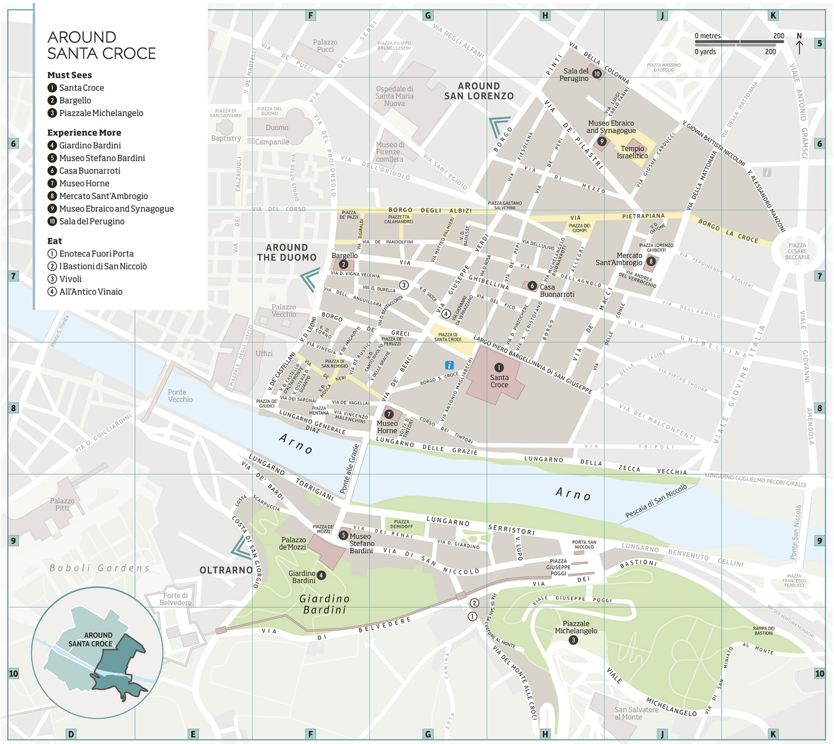
Must Sees

Experience More

In Roman times this area was home to an amphitheatre, the echoes of which can still be seen in the curved Via Torta and Piazza Peruzzi. Since the Middle Ages, however, the focal point of the neighbourhood has been Piazza Santa Croce, one of Florence's largest squares and the site of traditional events such as the Calcio Storico. The piazza is overlooked by the Gothic façade of the late 13th-century Santa Croce church, built with funds donated by the district's wealthy families. In medieval times tanners and wool dyers worked in this area using water from the Arno, and their trades are commemorated in road names such as Via delle Conce (tanneries) and Corso dei Tintori (dyers). Plans proposed in the 19th century to create an avenue linking Santa Croce to Piazza della Signoria were never carried out, but one successful project of that era was Piazzale Michelangelo, designed to add grandeur to the city when it was the national capital (1865–71). The area, along with the rest of the city, suffered from bomb damage during World War II, but out of the wreckage grew the Santa Croce leather school. Opened by the friars of Santa Croce and local leather artisans to teach war orphans a trade, it has helped to ensure the continuation of this important neighbourhood industry.

Area map

Around Santa Croce



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Must Sees

1 Santa Croce

2 Bargello

3 Piazzale Michelangelo

Experience More

4 Giardino Bardini

5 Museo Stefano Bardini

6 Casa Buonarroti

7 Museo Horne

8 Mercato Sant’Ambrogio

9 Museo Ebraico and Synagogue

0 Sala del Perugino

Eat

1 Enoteca Fuori Porta

2 I Bastioni di San Niccolò

3 Vivoli

4 All’Antico Vinaio

Google Map

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Santa Croce

H8 ⌂ Piazza di Santa Croce @ C, C2, C3, C4, 6, 14 # 11am–5pm Mon & Wed–Sat, 1–5pm Sun & hols; no visits during mass Σ santacroceopera.it

The magnificent Gothic church of Santa Croce dates from 1294, though its distinctive marble façade was not added until 1863. Inside lie the tombs of many famous Florentines, including Michelangelo and Galileo.

▲ Cappella de'Pazzi, a domed chapel designed by Brunelleschi in 1430

▲ The Neo-Gothic façade of the church, reclad in coloured marble in 1863

Composed of 16 family chapels, Santa Croce is considered the largest Franciscan church in the world. Its spacious, airy interior is enhanced by the 14th-century frescoes of Giotto and his gifted pupil, Taddeo Gaddi. The Arnolfo and Brunelleschi Cloisters provide visitors with fine examples of Renaissance architectural precision, and a moment of tranquillity during their tour. The rest of the monastic buildings form a museum of religious painting and sculpture.

Insider Tip

Leather School

Tucked under a discreet archway inside the church's grounds is the Scuola del Cuoio, or leather school. Students travel from across the world to train in traditional methods at this family-run institution. Visitors can take in

demonstrations or workshops, or simply buy the beautiful final products.

Notable Tombs

Leonardo Bruni

A staunch republican, Leonardo Bruni became Chancellor of Florence first in 1410, and then again in 1427. Rossellino's effigy (1447) of the great humanist, depicted in serene old age, is a triumph of realistic portraiture.

Lorenzo Ghiberti

Though Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378–1455) initially trained as a goldsmith, he instead found fame as a sculptor. He is best known as the creator of the magnificent doors of Florence's Baptistry, and is buried in Santa Croce along with his sons and assistants, Vittorio and Lorenzo.

Niccolò Machiavelli

Despite his religious scepticism, Machiavelli was buried here in 1527. The diplomat's monument, designed by Innocenzo Spinazzi, was finally erected more than 250 years after his death, in 1787.

Michelangelo

Michelangelo never completed the *Pietà* he planned for his own tomb. The artist died in Rome, miles from his beloved Florence, but his body was brought back to Santa Croce as his chosen place of burial. His monument was designed in 1570 by Vasari. It is the first tomb visitors see upon entering the church, and the figures adorning it depict Painting, Architecture and Sculpture.

Galileo Galilei

Condemned by the church in 1633 for his “heretic” beliefs, Galileo was denied a Christian burial until 1737, when a tomb designed by Giulio Foggini was erected.

 Google Map

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Bargello

 F7 ⌂ Via del Proconsolo 4 § 055 064 94 40 (bookings: 055 294 883) @ C2 # 10am–6pm Tue, 8:45am–7pm Wed–Mon

Located in the Palazzo del Bargello, an imposing, battlement-topped fortress, this museum has housed some of Italy's finest Renaissance sculptures since the mid-19th century.

▲ Exhibits in the museum, sitting beneath the Bargello's ornate 13th-century arches

▲ A magnificent 16th-century sculpture by architect Bartolomeo Ammannati.

Built in 1255 as the city’s town hall, the Bargello is the oldest seat of government surviving in Florence. Its austere, sand coloured walls surround a striking courtyard that is dotted with wide arches. In the 16th century, it was the residence of the chief of police and a prison, and executions were carried out here until 1786. After extensive restoration, it became one of Italy’s first national museums in 1865. Today the Bargello houses a superb collection of Florentine Renaissance sculpture, with rooms dedicated to the work of Michelangelo, Donatello, Verrocchio, Giambologna and Cellini, as well as a collection of Mannerist bronzes and examples from the decorative arts.

Gallery Guide

▲ An intricately painted plate, depicting two soldiers in combat

To the right of the entrance hall, the Michelangelo Room is presided over by *Bacchus* (1497), commissioned when the artist was only 21. Other highlights by Michelangelo include his *David-Apollo* (c 1530), marble bust *Brutus* (c 1539) and the unfinished *Pitti Tondo* bas-relief (1505). The courtyard staircase leads up to the Upper Loggia, filled with statues of birds by Giambologna. To the right is the Donatello Room, which contains the panels for the Baptistry doors competition of 1401 and his famous statue of *David* (1450), the first nude by a western artist since Classical times. The Magdalen Chapel and Islamic Collection are also on the first floor. The Verrocchio Room, the Andrea and Giovanni della Robbia rooms, the Arms and Armour Collection and the Room of the Small Bronzes are on the second floor.

1478

Bernardo Baroncelli was executed here for attempting to assassinate Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Google Map

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Piazzale Michelangelo

H10

Of all the great Florentine viewpoints – such as the Duomo and Campanile – none offers such a magnificent panorama of the city's skyline as Piazzale Michelangelo.

▲ Cityscape as seen from the Piazzale Michelangelo's renowned viewpoint

Laid out in the 1860s by Giuseppe Poggi, and dotted with copies of Michelangelo's statues, this square's balconies attract many visitors and the inevitable massed ranks of souvenir sellers. The piazzale remains an evocative spot, however, especially when the sun sets over the Arno and distant Tuscan hills. In spring you can admire multi-coloured blooms at the iris garden in the square, and for more expansive views you can stroll even higher to the nearby San Miniato al Monte, a picturesque 11th-century church. There is a rose garden en route back towards downtown Florence, filled with 350 varieties and a series of sculptures.

▲ The gorgeous interior of San Miniato al Monte is decorated with green and white marble.

eat

Enoteca Fuori Porta

Located on a steep street at the edge of the square, this local favourite combines traditional and contemporary flavours, and offers an excellent wine list.

G10 ⌂ Via del Monte alle Croci 10R Σ fuoriporta.it

¡¡¡

I Bastioni di San Niccolò

A small restaurant with a lively atmosphere; head here for hearty Italian fare and truly exceptional pizzas.

G9 ⌂ Via dei Bastioni 9R § 055 247 67 60

¡¡¡

Did You Know?

The creator of Pinocchio, Carlo Lorenzini, is buried in San Miniato’s cemetery.

Experience More

Google Map

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Giardino Bardini

F9 ⌂ Costa San Giorgio 2 # Gardens: daily; villa: 10am–7pm daily Σ villabardini.it

▲ The vista across the city rooftops from the viewing terrace of the Giardino Bardini

There are magnificent views over Florence from this historic garden, which dates from medieval times and occupies a steep area of hillside near the Boboli Gardens. The garden has a lovely wisteria tunnel, an Italianate section with a formal staircase and panoramic terrace, an English landscape garden with a decorative Chinese area, and a collection of fruit trees. The adjacent Villa Bardini hosts exhibitions and a museum dedicated to the 20th-century artist Pietro Annigoni.

CibrÈo Restaurants

The late chef Fabio Picchi's culinary legacy lives on in the Sant'Ambrogio

neighbourhood, where his son Giulio has taken over the reins of his Tuscan restaurants. Since the late 1970s, Fabio took so-called *cucina povera* ("peasant food") out of the rustic kitchen and into restaurants for locals and visitors alike, serving cows brain, tripe and *ribollita* (stale bread soup) without apology. Choose between the high-end Cibrèo restaurant, the low-key Trattoria and Caffè, or the Tuscan-Asian tasting menu of Ciblèo. Picchi's widow Maria is behind the Teatro del Sale, a theatre space that hosts stand-up comedians, jazz musicians and more, alongside a delectable buffet.

Google Map

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Museo Stefano Bardini

F9 ⌂ Via dei Renai 37 § 055 234 24 27 # 11am– 5pm Fri–Mon ¢ 1 Jan, Easter Sun, 1 May, 15 Aug, 25 Dec

Stefano Bardini was a 19th-century antiquarian and avid collector of architectural materials. In 1883, he built this palazzo almost entirely from salvaged medieval and Renaissance masonry, including carved doorways, chimney pieces and staircases, and painted and coffered ceilings. The rooms are full of sculpture, paintings, armour, musical instruments, ceramics and antique furnishings.

Google Map

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Casa Buonarroti

H7 ⌂ Via Ghibellina 70 # 10am–4:30pm Wed–Mon ¢ 1 Jan, Easter Sun, 15 Aug, 25 Dec Σ casabuonarroti.it

Michelangelo (whose surname was Buonarroti) bought a group of three houses on this site as an investment in the early 16th century and spent a short time here. Subsequent generations of his family employed eminent artists to decorate rooms to celebrate the artist's life. The significant collection of his works includes two early reliefs, the *Madonna della Scala* and the *Battle of the Centaurs*.

Google Map

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Museo Horne

 G8 ⌂ Via dei Benci 6 § 055 24 46 61 # 10am–2pm Thu–Tue

▲ *Three Saints* by Pietro Lorenzetti, in the Museo Horne

This small collection of paintings, sculpture and decorative arts was left to the city by Herbert Percy Horne (1844–1916), the English art historian. It is housed in a splendid example of a Renaissance *palazzino* (small townhouse), built in 1489 for the Alberti family, who grew wealthy from the city's thriving cloth trade. Don't miss the kitchen, with Horne's superb collection of Renaissance pots, artisan tools and cooking utensils.

From the Horne Museum you can arrange a visit to the Casa Vasari, just around the corner. This is where Giorgio Vasari lived from 1557 until his death in 1574. The walls are decorated with rich frescoes painted by the artist himself.

 Google Map

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Mercato Sant'Ambrogio

 J7 ⌂ Piazza Ghiberti # 7am–2pm Mon–Sat Σ mercatosantambrogio.it

Dating from 1873, this market is largely frequented by locals who come for the fresh fruit and vegetables, clothing and household goods on sale in the outside area as well as the speciality butchers and delis under cover. Prices are fair and there is a traditional feel

to the place; and if all the tempting produce whets your appetite, there is the Trattoria da Rocco, which serves delicious and genuine Florentine specialities.

Did You Know?

Renaissance *palazzini* often had the kitchen on the top floor to avoid fumes rising through the house.

 Google Map

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Museo Ebraico and Synagogue

 H6 ⌂ Via Farini 6 # Hours vary, check website ¢ Jewish hols Σ jewishflorence.it

The green copper-covered dome of Florence's main synagogue stands out on the horizon as you look down on the city from the surrounding hills. It's one of the largest synagogues in south-central Europe and also houses a museum of ritual objects dating from the 17th century. The interior is truly stunning, decorated in a colourful Moorish style, with sumptuous frescoes and mosaics, inlaid marble floors and stained-glass windows.

 Google Map

10

Sala del Perugino

 H5 ⌂ Via della Colonna 9 § 055 288 88 03 # 2:30–5:30pm Tue & Thu ¢ School holidays

An entrance through the Liceo Michelangelo school leads to the vaulted chapterhouse of the former Santa Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi convent, inside which is the magnificent, large-scale *Crucifixion and Saints* fresco painted by Perugino (1493-6). The beautifully preserved fresco is in three sections, following the arches of the room, unified by the lovely background, a detailed and serene landscape of wooded hills and winding streams.

EAT

Vivoli

The city’s oldest gelateria, dating from 1930. It is still run by the Vivoli family.

 G7 ⌂ Via dell’Isola delle Stinche 7R Σ vivoli.it

Lo Schiacciavino

Savour a true Florentine sandwich here.

 F8 ⌂ Via Giuseppe Verdi 6/r Σ schiacciavino.it

AROUND SAN LORENZO

▲ Tuscan produce at its finest on display at the Mercato Centrale

Introduction

Area Map

Must Sees

Experience More

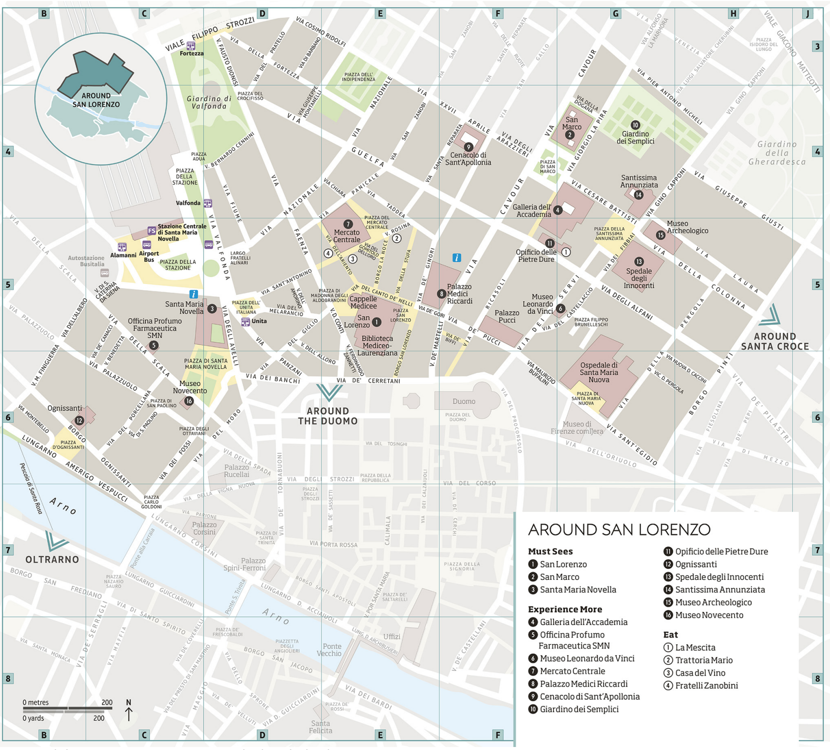
A Short Walk - AROUND SAN LORENZO

The Renaissance character of this area is the legacy of the Medici dynasty. Cosimo Il Vecchio commissioned the great artists and sculptors of the time to create numerous monuments, including the family's first residence, the Palazzo Medici Riccardi, and the churches of San Marco and San Lorenzo. Santa Maria Novella was also decorated with important artworks during the Renaissance, while the piazza on which the church sits was the location of the annual Palio dei Cocchi chariot race established at this time. In 1563 Europe's first art school was founded at the Accademia by Vasari (under Medici patronage); its Galleria was added in 1784 to inspire the students.

Following the relocation of the Medicis to Oltrarno in the 16th century, San Lorenzo became more working class. The Santa Maria Novella railway station was inaugurated in 1848 and in 1874 the Mercato Centrale was built to rehouse market stalls banished from the redesigned Piazza Repubblica. In the 20th century the area's status as the city's main transport hub was cemented with the construction of the Santa Maria Novella train station in 1935. Commissioned by the Fascist government to replace the 19th-century building, the plain, blocky structure embodies the functionalist architecture of the time and now hosts a large shopping centre underneath.

Area map

Around San Lorenzo



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Must Sees

1 San Lorenzo

2 San Marco

3 Santa Maria Novella

Experience More

4 Galleria dell’Accademia

5 Officina Profumo Farmaceutica SMN

6 Museo Leonardo da Vinci

7 Mercato Centrale

8 Palazzo Medici Riccardi

9 Cenacolo di Sant’Apollonia

10 Giardino dei Semplici

11 Opificio delle Pietre Dure

12 Ognissanti

13 Spedale degli Innocenti

14 Santissima Annunziata

15 Museo Archeologico

16 Museo Novecento

Eat

1 La Mescita

2 Trattoria Mario

3 Casa del Vino

4 Fratelli Zanobini

Google Map

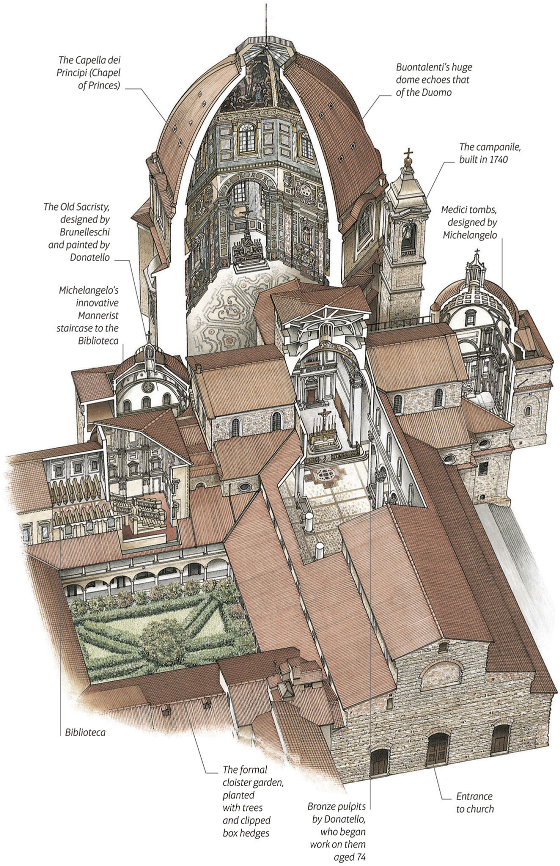
1 "

San Lorenzo

E5 ⌂ Basilica: Piazza San Lorenzo; Medici Chapels: Piazza di Madonna degli Aldobrandini § Medici Chapels tickets: 055 21 40 42 @ Many routes # Basilica: 10am–5:30pm Mon–Sat; Medici Chapels: 8:15am–1:50pm Sat–Mon, 1:15–6:50pm Wed–Fri ¢ Medici Chapels: 1 Jan, 25 Dec, 1st, 3rd & 5th Sun of the month

This rustic-looking basilica has towered above the neighbourhood to which it has given its name since the 1400s. It is one of the largest chapels in Florence and – built as it was over a 4th-century church – lays some claim to being the oldest.

▲ The terracotta-coloured rooftops of the church and dome rise above the San Lorenzo neighbourhood.



▲ The sprawling complex of San Lorenzo

San Lorenzo as seen today was the parish church of the Medici family, and they lavished their wealth on its adornment. Brunelleschi rebuilt the church in Renaissance Classical style in 1419, although the façade was never completed. In 1520 Michelangelo began work on the Medici tombs, before designing the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana in 1524 to house the family's collection of manuscripts; the library's Mannerist staircase is one of the artist's most innovative designs. The church is the burial place of all principal members of the Medici family, from Cosimo il Vecchio to Cosimo III, as well as other notable figures such as the artist Donatello.

Insider Tip

Market Price

The San Lorenzo outdoor market sprawls through the streets around the Mercato Centrale. Head here for leather goods, and be prepared to haggle.

6

Grand Dukes are buried in the Capella dei Principi.

Google Map

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San Marco

G4 ⌂ Piazza di San Marco § Church: 055 28 76 28; museum: 055 088 20 00 (reservations: 055 29 48 83) @ Many routes # Hours vary, call ahead ¢ Museum: 2nd & 4th Mon & 1st, 3rd & 5th Sun of month; 1 Jan, 1 May, 25 Dec

Still in use as a church today, this perfectly preserved Dominican monastery also houses the Museo di San Marco, which is home to the world's largest collection of works by Fra Angelico (1395–1455).

▲ *The Annunciation* (c 1440) by Fra Angelico, which demonstrates the artist's mastery of perspective

▲ The richly decorated interior of San Marco

The Basilica of San Marco was founded in the 13th century and enlarged in 1437, when Dominican monks from nearby Fiesole moved here at the invitation of Cosimo il Vecchio. He paid a considerable sum to have the building rebuilt by his favourite architect, Michelozzo, whose simple cloisters and cells are the setting for a remarkable series of devotional frescoes (c 1438–45) by Fra Angelico. Two cells were reserved for Cosimo il Vecchio, so that he could retreat to the monastery to meditate and pray. Today the monastery also serves as a museum, where Fra Angelico's most important paintings can be admired.

The “Mad Monk”

Girolamo Savonarola (1452–98), prior of San Marco, became popular for his calls for Christian renewal. When France threatened invasion in 1494, Florence expelled the ruling Medici family and installed a republic with the friar at the helm. Savonarola led campaigns against the excesses of the Renaissance, but enraged Pope Alexander VI with his radicalism, and he was executed in 1498. At San Marco you can see several relics of the “Mad Monk”, including his cloak and part of the beam he was hanged from.

Did You Know?

San Marco is home to Europe’s first public library, which opened in 1441 and contained 400 books.

 Google Map

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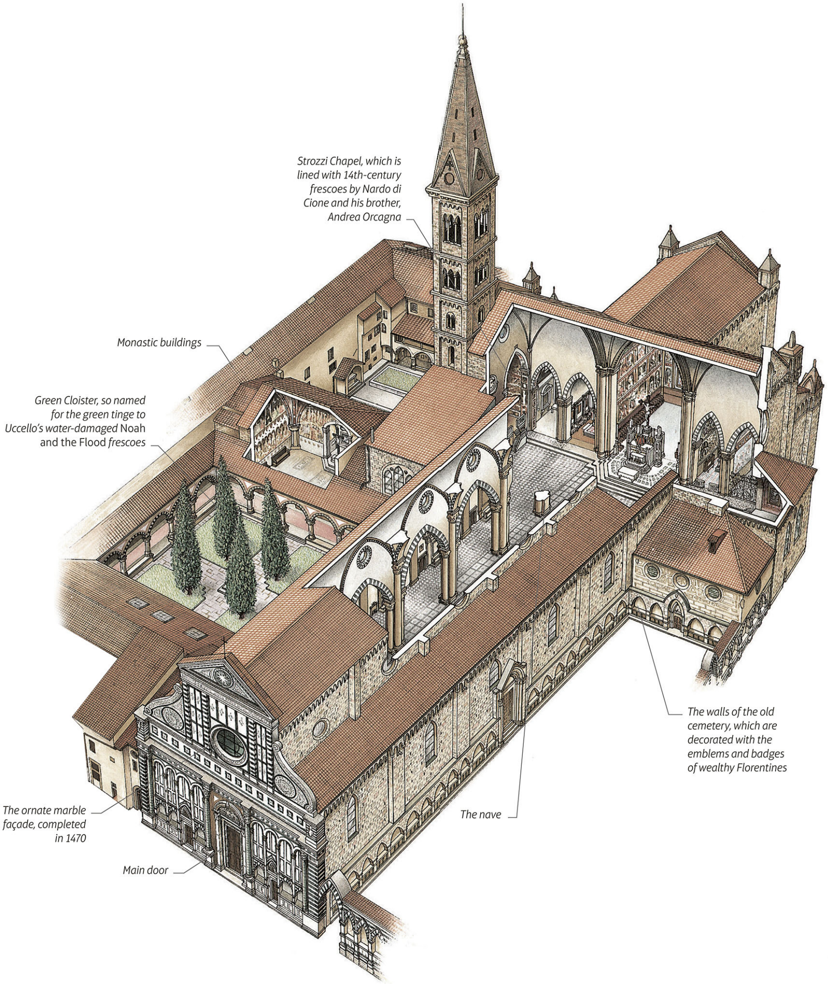
SANTA MARIA NOVELLA

 D5 ⌂ Piazza di Santa Maria Novella @ Several routes # Hours vary, check website ¢ Religious hols Σ smn.it/en

This basilica is fronted by a spectacular green-and-white marble façade. The interior is no less striking, with works by artists including Masaccio, Giotto and Ghirlandaio on display.



▲ The beautiful monastical complex of Santa Maria Novella

▲ The striking marble façade of Santa Maria Novella is bathed in golden Italian sunlight.

Built by the Dominicans from 1279 to 1357, the Gothic church of Santa Maria Novella houses some of the most important works of art in Florence. Beside the church is a cemetery walled in with *avelli* (grave niches), which continue along the façade and the wall beyond. The cloisters form a museum, within which the frescoes in the Spanish Chapel show the Dominicans as whippets – *domini canes*, or hounds of God – rounding up the “stray sheep”.

HOLY Trinity (c 1427)

Masaccio pioneered perspective in painting, using architectural illusion to create a three-dimensional effect. In this fresco, his most famous work, the figures form a triangle, symbolizing the Holy Trinity. The viewer's eye is drawn upwards to the figures of Christ and God the Father at the apex. The Virgin and St John are depicted as real people, rather than idealized figures. Lorenzo Lenzi, Masaccio's patron, kneels opposite his wife.

Experience More

Google Map

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Galleria dell’Accademia

G4 ⌂ Via Ricasoli 60 § Information: 055 098 71 00; booking: 055 29 48 83 # 9am-6:45pm Tue–Sun ¢ 1 Jan, 1 May, 25 Dec

The Academy of Fine Arts in Florence was founded in 1563 and was the first school in Europe set up to teach drawing, painting and sculpture. The art collection displayed in the gallery was formed in 1784 with the aim of providing students with material to study and copy.

Since 1873, many of Michelangelo’s most iconic works have been in the Accademia, most famously *David* (1504). This colossal Classical statue, 5.2 m (17 ft) tall, depicts the biblical hero who killed the giant Goliath. It was commissioned by the city of Florence and positioned in front of the Palazzo Vecchio. This established Michelangelo, then aged 29, as the foremost sculptor of his time. In 1873, it was moved to the Accademia, to protect it from the weather and pollution. A copy now stands in the original position in Piazza della Signoria; a second can be seen in the Piazzale Michelangelo.

Michelangelo’s other masterpieces here include a statue of St Matthew, finished in 1508, and the *Quattro Prigionieri* (the four prisoners), which were sculpted between 1521 and 1523 and intended to ornament the tomb of Pope Julius II. The muscular figures struggling to free themselves from the stone are among the most dramatic of his works. The statues were moved to the Grotta Grande in the Boboli Gardens in 1585, where casts of the originals can now be seen.

Also here are important paintings by 15th- and 16th- century contemporaries of Michelangelo such as Fra Bartolomeo, Filippino Lippi, Bronzino and Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio. They include the *Madonna del Mare* (Madonna of the Sea), attributed to Botticelli (1445–1510), and *Venus and Cupid* by Jacopo Pontormo (1494–1556), based on a preparatory drawing by Michelangelo. Also on

display is an elaborately painted wooden chest, the *Cassone Adimari*. Dating from around 1440, it originally held a bride's trousseau, and is covered with details of Florentine daily life, clothing and architecture. The bridal party is pictured standing in front of the Baptistry.

Pacino di Bonaguida's *Tree of Life* (1310) is a prominent painting among the Byzantine and late 13th- and 14th- century religious art, much of which is stylized and heavily embossed with gold.

The Salone della Toscana (Tuscany Room) is full of 19th-century sculpture and paintings by members of the Accademia, and a series of original plaster models by the sculptor Lorenzo Bartolini, a professor at the Accademia from 1839 until his death in 1850. His work includes busts of the poet Lord Byron and the composer Franz Liszt.

▲ Michelangelo's *David,* effortlessly dominating the Galleria dell'Accademia

Did You Know?

A replica *David* made for London's V&A Museum came with a detachable fig leaf for modesty.

Google Map

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Officina Profumo Farmaceutica SMN

C5 ⌂ Via della Scala 16 § 055 21 62 76 # Visits require reservations, call ahead

First opened in 1612 by Dominican friars at Santa Maria Novella, this unique perfumery has sold popular remedies and perfumes for over 400 years. The history of its aromatic waters can be traced all the way back to the 14th century, when they were used as a disinfectant during plague outbreaks. The frescoed premises, which include a museum and a tearoom, conjure up a real atmosphere of times gone by, and the ornate shop sells perfumes, cosmetic creams and natural remedies still made to the recipes used by the friars.

Fine Fragrance

Florence's master perfumers have been among the world's best for centuries. In addition to the historic Officina Profumo Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella, Dr Vranjes *(Via della Spada 9R)* has become a well-known name for luxury fragrances for the home and person, while Lorenzo Villoresi works on a smaller scale at his distinctive San Niccolò boutique-atelier.

Google Map

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Museo Leonardo da Vinci

G5 ⌂ Via dei Servi 66R # Hours vary, check website Σ mostredileonardo.com

This small interactive museum contains more than 40 life-sized models created from Leonardo's original plans – an awe-inspiring collection of inventions that show just how far ahead of his time the genius was. There are flying machines, contraptions destined for military use and examples of civil engineering, and visitors are free to turn handles, move levers and generally interact with the various items. Another room is dedicated to some of his greatest works of art, while a third has a display of video mapping on the human body to show how anatomical studies were fundamental to developments in the world of art and sculpture. The museum shop has excellent model kits of Leonardo's inventions as well as a

variety of books and souvenirs.

 Google Map

7
Mercato Centrale

 E5 ⌂ Via dell'Ariento 10–14 # 10am–midnight daily Σ
mercatocentrale.it

▲ Tuscan produce at its finest on display at the Mercato Centrale

At the heart of the San Lorenzo street market is the bustling Mercato Centrale, Florence's busiest food market. It is housed in a vast two-storey building of cast-iron and glass, built in 1874 by Giuseppe Mengoni. The ground-floor stalls sell meat, poultry, fish, hams, oils and cheeses. There are also Tuscan takeaway foods such as *porchetta* (roast suckling pig), *lampredotto* (pig's intestines) and *trippa* (tripe). The first floor functions as a large bar/restaurant, and also has a bank, a bookshop and a cooking school. On the mezzanine you will find a pizzeria and a restaurant.

 Google Map

8 " ' =
Palazzo Medici Riccardi

 F5 ⌂ Via Cavour 1 # 9am–7pm Thu–Tue ¢ 1 May, 25 Dec Σ
palazzomediciriccardi.it

▲ Palazzo Medici Riccardi

Home of the Medici for 100 years from 1444, the palazzo was later acquired by the Riccardi family and now houses government offices. It was built to an austere design by Michelozzo for Cosimo il Vecchio, who rejected Brunelleschi's original plans as too flamboyant – Cosimo did not want to flaunt his wealth. Through the main door, the courtyard walls are covered in ancient Roman masonry fragments. Donatello's statue *David* (now in the Bargello) used to be here, but today the place of honour is given to Bandinelli's marble *Orpheus*.

Only a few rooms inside are open to the public. In the Cappella dei Magi is a colourful fresco of *The Procession of the Magi* painted in 1459–60 by Benozzo Gozzoli. It depicts several members of the Medici dynasty. The Sala di Luca Giordano is named after the Neapolitan artist who painted its walls with *The Apotheosis of the Medici* in High Baroque style in 1683. Pre-booking is advisable at all times.

▲ A nobleman from the fresco of *The Procession of the Magi*

 Google Map

9
Cenacolo di Sant’Apollonia

 F4 ⌂ Via XXVII Aprile 1 § 055 29 06 56 # 8:15am–1:50pm Mon–Fri ¢ 1st, 3rd & 5th Sat & Sun of the month

The cloister and refectory of what was originally a convent for Camaldolite nuns are now used by the students of Florence University. On the main wall of the refectory is a fresco of *The Last Supper*, painted in 1445–50, one of the few surviving works by Andrea del Castagno. He was a pupil of Masaccio and among the first Renaissance artists to experiment with perspective. Judas sits isolated in the foreground of the picture, disrupting its balance and breaking up the long white strip of tablecloth. He has the face of a satyr: a mythological creature, half-man, half-goat, often used in

Renaissance paintings to represent evil.

 Google Map

10 "

Giardino dei Semplici

 G4 ⌂ Via Micheli 3 # 10am–7pm Tue–Sun Σ sma.unifi.it

▲ Part of the herb gardens growing “simples” at the Giardino dei Semplici

The word “Semplici” refers to the medicinal plants, or “simples”, grown and used by medieval apothecaries. This historic herb garden was set up in 1545 by Niccolò Tribolo for Cosimo I and retains its original layout. However, the plant collection today includes a variety of tropical specimens as well as flora native to Tuscany.

Also of interest are the large 19th-century glasshouses and an impressive selection of monumental trees. Up to 30 m (100 ft) tall, they include a yew tree planted from seed in 1720 and a cork oak planted in 1805; the trunk of which has a circumference of over 4 m (13 ft).

 Google Map

11 " =

Opificio delle Pietre Dure

 F5 ⌂ Via degli Alfani 78 § 055 29 48 83 # 8:15am–2pm Mon–Sat ¢ Public hols

Situated in the former monastery of San Niccolò, the *opificio*

(factory) was founded in the 16th century through the patronage of the Medici dukes and dedicated to the Florentine craft of producing inlaid pictures using marble and semiprecious stones. The tradition has flourished over the centuries and the *opificio* now runs a national institute teaching the craft. There is a small museum displaying 19th-century workbenches, tools, vases and portraits showing *pietre dure* work, as well as exquisite marbles and semiprecious stones dating to Medici times. Several *pietre dure* table tops are on display. Since 1975, the institution has incorporated the Florentine centre for art restoration, which uses highly advanced techniques.

Eat & Drink

La Mescita

A traditional hostelry with a handful of tables, serving panini and hearty dishes.

G5 ⌂ Via degli Alfani 70R § 3477 95 16 04

Trattoria Mario

This historic restaurant offers a lunch menu of typical local dishes.

E5 ⌂ Via Rosina 2R Σ trattoriamario.com

Casa del Vino

This place is ideal for a glass of Chianti and a snack.

E5 ⌂ Via dell' Ariento 16R ¢ Sun Σ casadelvino.it

Fratelli Zanobini

An atmospheric wine bar; expect standing room only.

E5 ⌂ Via Sant'Antonino 47R ¢ Sun Σ lelame.com

Google Map

12

Ognissanti

B6 ⌂ Borgo Ognissanti 42 # 9:30am–12:30pm & 4–7:15pm Thu–Tue; *The Last Supper* fresco: 2–6pm daily ¢ Wed morning Σ chiesaognissanti.it

▲ The façade of the Ognissanti, an example of Baroque architecture

All Saints was the church of the Vespucci, one of whose members, the 15th-century navigator Amerigo, gave his name to the Americas. He is depicted in a Ghirlandaio fresco in the second chapel on the right. The major artwork here, however, is Giotto's *Crucifix*, painted on wood; recently restored, its brilliant colours are breathtaking.

Ognissanti is also the burial place of Sandro Botticelli. His fresco of *St Augustine* (1480) is on the south wall. Alongside the church is a cloister and a refectory in which Ghirlandaio's fresco *The Last Supper* (1480), with its background of birds and trees, can be seen.

 Google Map

13 " ' -

Spedale degli Innocenti

 G5 ⌂ Piazza della Santissima Annunziata 12 # 11am–6pm Wed–Mon Σ museodeglinnocenti.it

Built in the early 15th century as an orphanage, the most beautiful feature of the Hospital of the Innocents is its elegant colonnades by Brunelleschi, a masterpiece of early Renaissance architecture. The

rounded arches are interspersed with sky-blue terracotta roundels with images of babies added by Andrea della Robbia at a later date. Look out for the *rota*, a rotating stone to the left of the portico where unwanted children could be left anonymously to the care of the orphanage.

The institute continues to work for children's rights to this day. It also has a museum with around 80 paintings including works by Botticelli and Ghirlandaio, as well as a display on the history of the organization. There are views across the rooftops of Florence and the Duomo from the top-floor terrace café.

 Google Map

14

Santissima Annunziata

 G4 ⌂ Piazza della Santissima Annunziata # 7:30am–12:30pm, 4–6:30pm daily (also 8:45–9:45pm Sun) Σ annunziata.xoom.it

▲ Sepulchral and richly decorated, the interior of Santissima Annunziata

The Basilica of the Holy Annunciation was founded by the Servite order in 1250 and rebuilt by Michelozzo between 1444 and 1481. There is a series of early 16th-century frescoes in the atrium by Mannerist artists Rosso Fiorentino, Andrea del Sarto and Jacopo Pontormo, but many have suffered from damp and are fading. The most celebrated are *The Journey of the Magi* (1511) and *The Birth of*

the Virgin (1514), by del Sarto.

The church contains one of the most revered shrines in Florence, a painting of the Virgin Mary begun in 1252 by a monk. Devout Florentines believe it was finished by an angel. Nine chapels radiate from the sanctuary. The central one contains the tomb of Giambologna, with bronze reliefs and a crucifix he sculpted for his own resting place.

Through the door in the north transept of the church is the Chiostro dei Morti (Cloister of the Dead), originally used as a burial ground and packed with memorial stones. The fresco above the entrance porch is by Andrea del Sarto. Painted in 1525, it shows the Holy Family resting on their flight to Egypt and is usually known as *La Madonna del Sacco*, since Joseph is depicted leaning on a sack.

Did You Know?

Many newly-weds visit Santissima Annunziata to present a bouquet of flowers to the Virgin.

Google Map

15 "

Museo Archeologico

G5 ⌂ Piazza Santissima Annunziata 9B § 055 235 75 # 8:30am–2pm Mon–Wed & Sat, 1:30–7pm Thu & Fri ¢ 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sun of the month

The Archaeological Museum is in a palazzo built by Giulio Parigi for the Princess Maria Maddalena de'Medici in 1620. The museum now exhibits outstanding collections of Etruscan, Greek, Roman and ancient Egyptian artifacts, the latter including a complete chariot of bone and wood found near Thebes that dates from the 15th century BCE.

A section on the second floor is dedicated to Greek vases, with a room given over to the François Vase, found in an Etruscan tomb at Fonte Rotella near Chiusi. Painted and signed in 570 BCE, it is decorated with six rows of black and red figures depicting scenes from Greek mythology. The Etruscan collection was very badly damaged by the 1966 floods in Florence, so since then restoration work has been carried out on the pieces.

On the first floor there are two famous bronzes. The *Chimera*, sculpted in the 4th century BCE, is a mythical lion with a goat's head and a serpent for a tail, shown here cowering in terror. It was ploughed up in a field near Arezzo in 1553 and presented to Cosimo I de'Medici by Giorgio Vasari. The *Arringatore* (Orator) was found c 1566 near Lake Trasimeno in central Italy and is inscribed with the name of an Etruscan aristocrat, Aulus Metullus. The sculpture dates from the 1st century BCE, and the figure, splendidly dressed in a Roman toga, appears to be addressing his audience.

▲ The ancient Etruscan François Vase in the Museo Archeologico

New travel routes

Masters of perspective, Florentine artists made excellent navigators and mapmakers. When Columbus returned from his transatlantic voyage, King Ferdinand of Spain hired Amerigo Vespucci, from the Florentine merchant family, to verify this new route to the Indies. On his voyage Vespucci soon realized that Columbus had instead sailed to another continent, describing his findings in letters home to Florence. His colleagues quickly drew up the new landmass and named it America, in tribute to Vespucci.

Google Map

Museo Novecento

 C6 ⌂ Piazza Santa Maria Novella 10 # 11am–8pm Mon–Sun Σ museonovecento.it

Housed in a lovely former convent opposite the church of Santa Maria Novella, this fine museum was inaugurated in 2014. Displaying around 400 works in chronological order, it offers visitors a comprehensive picture of Italian art from the early 20th century to the present day. Temporary exhibitions focusing on individual artists or themes are held regularly while the rich permanent collections include works by Giorgio Morandi, Giorgio de Chirico, Filippo de Pisis, Mario Sironi and Renato Guttuso as well as a series of portraits by local artist Otone Rosai. Arts and crafts workshops for children can be booked. The museum also hosts a range of concerts and screenings.

A Short Walk

Around San Lorenzo

n **Locator Map** (for more detail see Area Map)

This area has the mark of Cosimo il Vecchio, founder of the Medici dynasty, who commissioned San Lorenzo and the Palazzo Medici Riccardi. In much of the area, and especially around the Mercato Centrale, a huge general market fills the streets, its colourful awnings almost obscuring the various monuments. The market is a reminder that Florence has always been a city of merchants. Many of the products on sale – leather goods and silk, wool and cashmere garments – are great value, especially if, like the Florentines, you are prepared to bargain.

n Double-tap image to read the labels

Distance 1 km (0.5 miles)

Nearest bus stop Santa Maria Maggiore

Time 15 minutes

Did You Know?

The Biblioteca Riccardiana holds a 14th-century manuscript of Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Oltrarno

▲ Elaborate fountain on the corner of Piazza de'Frescobaldi

Introduction

Area Map

Must Sees

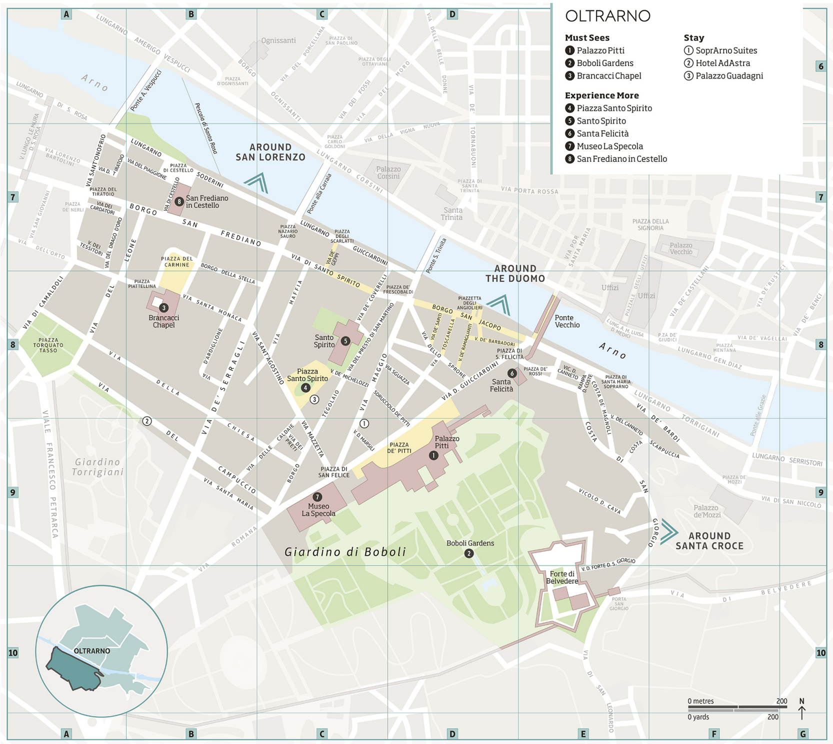
Experience More

A Short Walk - OLTRARNO

Literally "across the Arno", the Oltrarno was not incorporated into the city until the final set of defensive walls was built in 1333. Initially the poorest area of town, separated from the grander centre by the river, Oltrarno changed when the Medici household moved to the Palazzo Pitti in the mid-16th century. Built a century earlier by Luca Pitti with the aim of outdoing the splendour of the rival Medici and Strozzi palazzi, the palazzo was bought by Eleonora di Toledo, wife of Cosimo I, who believed that the relatively rural setting would be beneficial to her poor health. The Medicis expanded the palazzo still further and although their presence drew other aristocrats to this part of town, the area retained its original character, particularly around Santo Spirito and Borgo San Frediano. Here, in the many artisan workshops and trattorias serving genuine home cooking, is where the traditional side of Florence is most evident. In recent years it has become the city's trendiest and most liveable neighbourhood, thanks to its bohemian atmosphere and its shielded location away from the main tourist sights. The proliferation of independent boutiques and buzzing bars and restaurants has only added to its appeal.

Area map

OLTRARNO



n Double-tap image to read the labels

Must Sees

1 Palazzo Pitti

2 Boboli Gardens

3 Brancacci Chapel

Experience More

4 Piazza Santo Spirito

5 Santo Spirito

6 Santa Felicità

7 Museo La Specola

8 San Frediano in Cestello

Stay

1 SoprArno Suites

2 Hotel AdAstra

3 Palazzo Guadagni

Google Map

1 " - =

Palazzo Pitti

D9 ⌂ Piazza de' Pitti @ C1, C2, C3 # 8am–6:30pm Tue–Sun ¢ 1 Jan, 25 Dec Σ uffizi.it/en/pitti-palace

Although the palace still bears the name of its original owner, it is best known as a residence of the Medici family. Today four separate museums are housed across this sprawling Renaissance site, displaying a wealth of artistic and decorative treasures. The star collection is that of the Palatine Gallery: frescoed by Pietro da Cortona and second only to the Uffizi, it contains one of the world's best selections of works by Raphael and Titian.

▲ Luxuriously furnished imperial apartment on the first floor of Palazzo Pitti

▲ A spectacularly gilded and frescoed ceiling within the Palazzo Pitti

The Palazzo Pitti, begun in 1457, was originally built for the banker Luca Pitti. The Medici are responsible for its huge scale, however, after they bought the palazzo a century later when building costs bankrupted Pitti's heirs. The family enlarged the palace and developed it into its current shape. It became the dynasty's main residence and subsequently all Florentine rulers lived here. Today, the richly decorated rooms exhibit treasures from the Medici collection and the Habsburg-Lorraine court.

The Palatine Gallery is home to a vast art collection amassed by the Medici family and the Habsburg-Lorraine duchies in the 1600s and 1700s, and it opened to the public in 1833. Other attractions include the royal apartments, the Medici collection of jewellery and

treasures, the gallery of modern art, and an exhibition of 18th-, 19th- and 20th-century Italian clothing.

Did You Know?

Napoleon used the palace as his Florentine residence during his reign over Italy.

Insider Tip

Arty Audio

Artworks in the Palatine Gallery are hung as they would have been while the Medici family lived here. The sheer size of the collection can be overwhelming, so we recommend picking up an audio guide.

The Palatine Gallery

The gallery contains a superb collection of works dating from the Renaissance and Baroque. They are hung as the 17th- and 18th-century Grand Dukes wished, placed purely for their effect, regardless of subject or chronology. Rooms 4 to 8 are painted with Baroque ceiling frescoes begun by Pietro da Cortona and finished by his pupil Ciro Ferri, which allegorize the education of a prince by the gods. The other rooms in the gallery were private apartments and their decor ranges from the opulent to the severe.

Although some of the Medici collection has been transferred to the Uffizi, the Palatine Gallery still has masterpieces by Botticelli, Perugino, Titian, Andrea del Sarto, Pontormo, Tintoretto, Veronese, Caravaggio, Rubens, Van Dyck and others. There are approximately 1,000 paintings here, providing a vast survey of 16th- and 17th-century European painting.

LA VELATA

Raphael did many portraits, usually of Madonnas, and several of his best are in these collections. *La Velata* (1516) is his masterpiece of portraiture, displaying his skills with colour, light and form. The sitter is most likely La Fornarina, his Roman girlfriend. Other works by Raphael in the Palatine include *Portrait of a Woman* and *Madonna of the Chair*.

Unmissable Collections

Royal Apartments

The Royal Apartments on the first floor of the south wing of the palazzo were built in the 17th century. They are decorated with frescoes by various Florentine artists and a series of portraits of the Medici by the Flemish painter Justus Sustermans, who worked at the court between 1619 and 1681. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the apartments were completely revamped in Neo-Classical style by the Dukes of Lorraine when they succeeded the Medici dynasty as the rulers of Florence.

The apartments are lavishly appointed with ornate gold and white stuccowork ceilings and rich decoration. Their varied ownership is revealed in the inconsistent design, which embraces three distinct artistic periods.

Tesoro dei Granduchi

This museum is on the ground and mezzanine floors – below the Palatine Gallery – in the rooms used by the Medici as their summer apartments. It displays the massive private wealth of the Medici dynasty: the collection encompasses rare and beautiful examples of ancient Roman glassware, ivory, carpets, crystal and amber, and fine works by Florentine and German goldsmiths. The pride of the collection are 16 *pietre dure* vases, displayed in the Sala Buia. These belonged to Lorenzo the Magnificent and are from the ancient Roman and Byzantine periods.

The family's lavish tastes are reflected in the museum's polished ebony furniture inlaid with semiprecious marbles and stones. Portraits of the Medici hang throughout the rooms, including a series of the Grand Duchesses, and Cosimo I and his family carved in an onyx cameo.

Galleria d'Arte Moderna

Here, the paintings span the period from 1784 to 1924; many of them were amassed by the Dukes of Lorraine. The present museum has combined this collection with pictures donated by the state and various private collectors. The museum contains Neo-Classical, Romantic and religious works, but probably the most important collection is of the group of late 19th-century artists known as the Macchiaioli

(spotmakers), similar to French Impressionists. This collection was given to the city of Florence in 1897 by the art critic Diego Martelli, and includes paintings by Giovanni Fattori and Giovanni Boldini. Two works by Camille Pissarro hang in the same room.

Museo della Moda e del Costume

Opened in 1983, this gallery is on the ground floor of the Palazzo Meridiana. It was designed in 1776 by Gaspare Maria Paoletti and is home to more than 6,000 pieces. The exhibits reflect the changing tastes in the courtly fashion of the late 18th century up to the 1920s. Some items of 20th-century haute couture are also on display, from big-hitting designers such as Valentino, Armani, Versace and Saint Laurent.

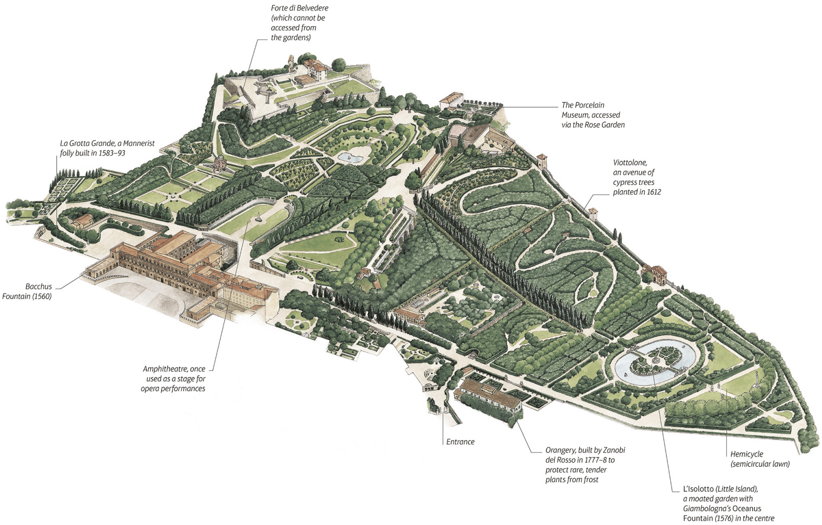
Google Map

2 " =

Boboli Gardens

D9 ⌂ Piazza de' Pitti @ D, 11, 36, 37 # Mar: 9am–1pm & 2–5pm; Apr–Oct: 9am–1pm & 2–6pm; Nov–Feb: 9am–1pm & 2–4pm ¢ 1st & last Mon of month; 1 Jan & 25 Dec Σ uffizi.it/en/boboli-garden

Unfurling down the hill behind the Palazzo Pitti are the Boboli Gardens, captivating any visitor with their lush greenery. Spend a couple of hours exploring the elegant lawns, dramatic amphitheatre and hidden grottoes of these manicured 16th-century gardens.



▲ The meticulously designed landscape of the gardens

▲ La Grotta Grande is one of the most spectacular sites in the gardens. Its walls are decorated with mother-of-pearl, shells and dramatic artificial stalactites.

The Boboli Gardens were laid out for the Medici in 1550, one year after they bought the Palazzo Pitti. A perfect example of stylized Renaissance gardening, they were opened to the public in 1766. The more formal parts of the gardens, nearest to the palazzo, consist of box hedges clipped into symmetrical geometric patterns. These lead to wild groves of ilex and cypress trees, planted to create a contrast between artifice and nature; both gardens are dotted with statues of varying styles and periods. There are splendid views, too, over the city. In 2017, fashion house Gucci pledged €2 million to restore the gardens to their former glory.

Hidden Gem

Kaffeehaus

This pale green Rococo-style pavilion was built in 1774. It was added by the Lorraine family as a place to take a coffee break when touring the gardens. The on-site café is open in summer, and offers beautiful views from its terrace.

Did You Know?

In Dan Brown's novel *Inferno*, one of the protagonists escapes via the gardens.

Google Map

3 "

Brancacci Chapel

B8 ⌂ Piazza del Carmine § 055 238 21 95, (reservations: 055 276 82 24)

@ D # 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun ¢ Public hols

The church of Santa Maria del Carmine was built in the 15th century, but nearly destroyed by a fire in 1771. The chapel's magnificent frescoes were fortunately spared and remain the site's main draw today.

▲ Santa Maria del Carmine

▲ The magnificent Renaissance interior of the Brancacci Chapel

The most famous of the church's frescoes is *The Life of St Peter* series in the Brancacci Chapel, commissioned by the Florentine merchant Felice Brancacci in around 1424. Masolino began the work in 1425, but many of the scenes are by his pupil, Masaccio, who died before completing the cycle. Filippino Lippi finished the work 50 years later, in 1480. Masaccio's use of perspective in *The Tribute Money* and the realism of his figures in *The Expulsion of Adam and Eve* placed him in the vanguard of Renaissance painting. Many great artists, including Michelangelo, later visited the chapel to study his pioneering work.

Insider Tip

Zoom In

Art fans may find it worthwhile to invest in a pair of binoculars before visiting the chapel. Some of the frescoes are fairly far off the ground, but you'll want to take in all the finer details.

Experience More

Google Map

4

Piazza Santo Spirito

 C8

This part of Florence is best appreciated by wandering around the square and its market, looking at the many furniture restorers' workshops and medieval palazzi and taking a break in one of the attractive bars and cafés. The biggest house here is the Palazzo Guadagni (1505), on the corner with Via Mazzetta. The top floor, now a hotel, has a wide, open loggia with a fantastic view of the neighbourhood. The first of its kind to be built in the city, the loggia was soon copied by other 16th-century Florentine aristocrats in their own palazzi.

Google Map

5

Santo Spirito

 C8 ⌂ Piazza di Santo Spirito # 10am–1pm & 3–6pm Mon–Sat, 11:30am–1:30pm & 3–6pm Sun & hols ¢ Wed Σ basilicasantospirito.it

The Augustinian foundation of this basilica dates from 1250. The present building has an unfinished 18th-century façade, which dominates the northern end of Piazza Santo Spirito. Brunelleschi designed the church in 1435, but it was not completed until the late 1400s, well after his death.

Inside, the harmony of the proportions has been somewhat spoiled by the elaborate Baroque baldacchino and the High Altar. There are 38 side altars, decorated with 15th- and 16th-century Renaissance paintings and sculpture, among them works by Cosimo Rosselli, Domenico Ghirlandaio and Filippino Lippi.

In the north aisle, a door beneath the organ leads to a vestibule with an ornate coffered ceiling. It was designed by Simone del Pollaiuolo, more commonly known as Cronaca, in 1491.

All that survives of the monastery that stood next to Santo Spirito

is the refectory, the **Cenacolo di Santo Spirito**, now a small museum. Inside is a fresco, *The Crucifixion* (1360–65), attributed to the followers of Andrea Orcagna and his brother Nardo di Cione. In a city that has a wealth of Renaissance art, this is a rare and beautiful example of High Gothic religious work.

▲ Brunelleschi's vaulted arcades with side altars, Santo Spirito

" '

Cenacolo di Santo Spirito

§ 055 28 70 43 # 10am–1pm & 3–6pm Mon–Sat, 11:30am–1:30pm & 3–6pm Sun & hols ¢ 1 Jan, Easter Sun, 1 May, 15 Aug, 25 Dec

Fiesole

Just 7 km (4 miles) from Florence, the attractive town of Fiesole makes an easy day trip. The ancient Etruscan settlement is a popular retreat from the city thanks to its hilltop position, which attracts cool breezes and offers a panoramic view over Florence in the valley below. Bus 7 leaves from Piazza San Marco three times an hour for Fiesole, taking around 20 minutes.

Google Map

6

Santa Felicità

D8 ⌂ Piazza di Santa Felicità § 055 21 30 18 # 9:30am–12:30pm & 3:30–5:30pm Mon–Sat

A church has stood on this site since the 4th century, but the current building dates from the 11th century. It was extensively remodelled by Ferdinando Ruggieri in 1736–9, but some original Gothic features and the porch added by Vasari in 1564 were retained.

The Capponi family chapel to the right of the entrance houses two works by Mannerist artist Jacopo da Pontormo: a panel depicting *The Deposition* and an *Annunciation* fresco. Painted in 1525–8, they make use of vivid colours, such as salmon pink, light green, apricot and gold. The roundels at the base of the ceiling vault depict the *Four Evangelists*, also painted by Pontormo, with help from his pupil Agnolo Bronzino.

Google Map

7 " '

Museo La Specola

C9 ⌂ Via Romana 17 # 9am–5pm Tue–Sun Σ sma.unifi.it

This unusual museum is housed inside the Palazzo Rottigiani, built in 1775 and now used by the natural science faculty of Florence University. The name "La Specola" refers to the observatory built on the roof of the building by Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo in the late 18th century. It now contains the museum, which has a zoological section exhibiting vast numbers of preserved animals, insects and fish, and an anatomical section with some very realistic 18th-century wax models showing grotesque aspects of human physiology and disease.

Did You Know?

The English poets Elizabeth and Robert Browning lived in the Oltrarno after eloping in 1847.

Google Map

8

San Frediano in Cestello

B7 ⌂ Piazza di Cestello § 055 21 58 16 # 9–11:30am & 4:30–6pm daily

▲ The church of San Frediano, blending in with the low roofline

The San Frediano area, with its small, low houses, has long been associated with the wool and leather industries. The parish church of San Frediano in Cestello stands beside the Arno, looking across the river. It has a bare-stone exterior with a large dome that is a local landmark. It was built in 1680–89 by Antonio Maria Ferri: inside, the fresco and stuccowork are typical of the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

Stay

SoprArno Suites

Vintage furnishings, original frescoes and wooden floors characterize this stylish yet friendly small hotel.

□ C9 ⌂ **Via Maggio 35** Σ soprarnosuites.com

¡¡¡

Hotel AdAstra

Quiet but characterful, with a wide terrace overlooking gardens. Each of the 14 rooms has very individual, often quirky, decor.

□ B9 ⌂ **Via del Campuccio 53** Σ adastraflorence.it

¡¡¡

Palazzo Guadagni

In prime position at the heart of the Oltrarno neighbourhood, this 16th-century palazzo offers 15 comfortable rooms. The top-floor loggia is ideal for relaxing with a drink.

□ C8 ⌂ **Piazza Santo Spirito 9** Σ palazzoguadagni.com

¡¡¡

A short walk

OLTRARNO

n **Locator Map** (for more detail see Area Map)

For the most part, the Oltrarno is a laid-back area of small houses, cobbled streets, independent shops and leafy squares. Along Borgo Santo Spirito and Borgo San Frediano, charming bars and restaurants serve reasonably priced food, and the area is full of studios and workshops restoring antique furniture. Among the things to see are Santo Spirito Church and Palazzo Pitti, one of the city's largest palaces, which contains an art collection second only to that of the Uffizi.

n Double-tap image to read the labels

Distance 1.2 km (0.75 miles)

Nearest bus stop Frescobaldi

Time 20 minutes

Did You Know?

The nearby San Niccolò district is home to lots of great-value bars and restaurants.

◀ Contents

EXPERIENCE TUSCANY

▲ The rooftops of Siena

GETTING TO KNOW TUSCANY

Northeast Tuscany

Central Tuscany

Southeast Tuscany

Northwest Tuscany

Southwest Tuscany

GETTING TO KNOW

TUSCANY

Rolling hills and charming villages, delicious food and fine wine, cities of art and colourful traditions, plus a varied coastline with a sprinkling of islands – Tuscany really does have it all. Beyond the famous destinations such as Pisa and Siena, there are plenty of fascinating quiet corners to be explored.

Northeast Tuscany

Inspirational and spiritual, this corner of the region combines the timeless landscapes of steep wooded hillsides, chosen by religious orders for their most remote communities, with the agricultural plains. Affluent and industrious towns such as Prato and Pistoia house unexpected artistic treasures, while the wide expanses of farmland are punctuated by the occasional, perfectly proportioned, Renaissance villa – a legacy of the Medici family, who originated here. Lying comparatively off the beaten track, this area offers a peaceful respite from the tourist hotspots elsewhere.

Best for *Hill walking, foraging for chestnuts and discovering lesser-known towns and villages*

Home to *Mugello*

Experience *A horse trek in hilly Mugello*

Go To: NORTHEAST TUSCANY ►

▲ Mountain-bike riders head towards Mount Calvana

Central Tuscany

A far cry from frenetic Florence nearby, the gentle hills of the Chianti region have an appealingly slow pace of life. Locals greet each other by name and take the time to chat; their understandable pride in living in this delightful area is apparent in the well-kept villages with their traditional shops and restaurants. San Gimignano, famous for its wine and one of Tuscany's most attractive historic centres, is a magnet for artists from all over the world. They come to draw and paint, often opening studios and taking root in this welcoming part of the region.

Best for *Wine-tasting and traditional restaurants*

Home to *Chianti, Volterra, San Gimignano*

Experience *Cycling through vineyards*

Go To: CENTRAL TUSCANY ►

▲ Sunrise in San Gimignano

Southeast Tuscany

Stunning nature and architecture intermingle in this part of Tuscany, particularly in Siena. The colourful city exudes a vivacious energy, and anyone from the vicinity will be asked their *contrada* (district) before their name. Throughout the area, the friendly and open local character is expressed by an atmosphere that is both lively and relaxed – as epitomized by the flavours of the world-class local wines, Brunello di Montalcino and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano.

Best for *Timeless landscapes*

Home to *Siena, Arezzo, Cortona*

Experience *Hunting for truffles near Siena*

Go To: SOUTHEAST TUSCANY ►

▲ Cypress trees along a winding road near Pienza

Northwest Tuscany

A land of many talents, northwest Tuscany is home to a famous local rivalry between Pisa and Livorno, which is no less strongly felt today than it was during Medici rule. Nonetheless, the area is the most pioneering, forward thinking corner of Tuscany. The busy working port town of Livorno has always been an open-minded melange of cultures, while Pisa is home to one of the country's most populous universities, with a variegated and lively vibe. Further north, the marble favoured by Michelangelo and other sculptors is a constant presence, important for both the economy and culture.

Best for *Opera and sculpture*

Home to *Pisa, Lucca*

Experience *A tour of a marble quarry*

Go To: NORTHWEST TUSCANY ►

▲ The stunning marble quarries of Carrara, Alpi Apuane

Southwest Tuscany

This part of the region is a curious combination of prestigious and elemental. It is home to some of Italy’s most exclusive resorts, including Monte Argentario, where yacht owners frequent the classy boutiques and restaurants of Porto Ercole and Porto Santo Stefano. Just a few kilometres away, however, are the wild expanses of the Maremma and evocative natural areas such as the Orbetello nature reserve, a favourite among bird watchers. Popular with divers, Elba and the other islands of the Tuscan Archipelago have a strongly independent character that makes them highly alluring.

Best for *Natural wonders and ancient Etruscan remains*

Home to *The Tuscan Archipelago*

Experience *Views of the spectacular coastline aboard a boat tour*

Go To: SOUTHWEST TUSCANY ►

▲ Boats in the Porto Santo Stefano in Maremma

Northeast Tuscany

▲ The Palazzo dei Capitani (Palace of the Captains) in Palazzuolo sul Senio

Introduction

Area Map

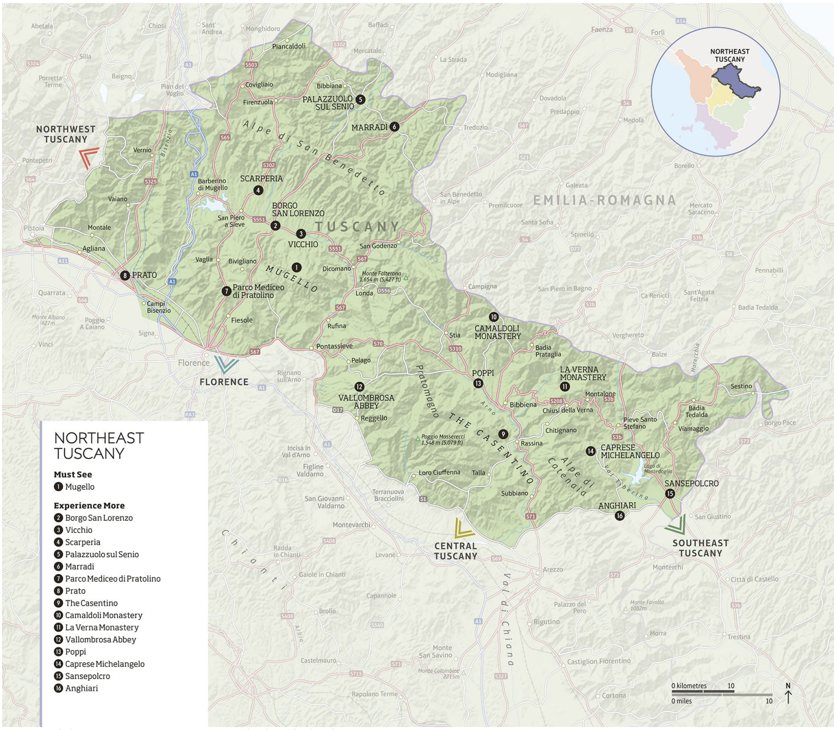
Must Sees

Experience More

It's little wonder that this beautiful area, characterized by the forests and mountains of the Mugello and Casentino, has produced many of history's most inspired artists – from Giotto and Fra Angelico (both from Vicchio) to Piero della Francesca (San Sepolcro) and Michelangelo (Caprese Michelangelo). In medieval times the region attracted religious hermits seeking isolation, and several impressive monasteries and convents were built; the mountain-top sanctuary of La Verna is reputed to be the place where St Francis received the stigmata.

The Medici family were already important landowners in Mugello by the late Middle Ages, long before they founded the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, and they constructed a legacy of elegant villas across the countryside. They also founded the towns of Firenzuola (1332) and Scarperia (1306), the latter of which became – and still is – a major knife-making centre. The textiles industry in Prato also began in medieval times, and the city remains a world leader in the field to this day.

Area map
Northeast Tuscany



n Double-tap image to read the labels

Must See

1 Mugello

Experience More

2 Borgo San Lorenzo

3 Vicchio

4 Scarperia

5 Palazzuolo sul Senio

6 Marradi

7 Parco Mediceo di Pratolino

8 Prato

9 The Casentino

10 Camaldoli Monastery

11 La Verna Monastery

12 Vallombrosa Abbey

13 Poppi

14 Caprese Michelangelo

15 Sansepolcro

16 Anghiari

Google Map

1

Mugello

@ n Piazzale Lavacchini, 1, Borgo San Lorenzol; mugellotoscana.it

The unspoiled, wooded slopes of Mugello form a natural gateway from Florence and Tuscany through the Apennines to northern Italy.

▲ Picturesque landscape of the Mugello valley in summer

▲ Cafaggiolo Castle was designed for Cosimo il Vecchio and was a favourite haunt of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Mugello has attracted travellers since Etruscan times, thanks to its location on the Via degli Dei – an ancient route from Florence that passes through the mountains and across the border to Emilia Romagna. Although the path is still popular with walkers and cyclists, the area has remained largely untouched by mass tourism, and rural traditions continue to flourish. Farming has always been fundamental to the economy here, and Mugello's specialities are famously flavoursome.

Mugello's distinctive grey stone, Pietra Serena, has been popular with architects and sculptors since the Renaissance. The area's

villages are all built from it, as are the pavements of Florence. Steve Jobs was so impressed by the latter that he chose Pietra Serena for flooring at Apple stores worldwide.

Did You Know?

The Mugello circuit hosted its first Formula One race in 2020, named the Tuscan Grand Prix.

The Medicis and Mugello

The Medici family originated in Mugello and owned numerous properties there, inspiring other influential Florentine families to follow suit. Trebbio and Cafaggiolo castles were designed by Michelozzo for Cosimo il Vecchio, while the 16th-century Fortezza San Martino was built for Cosimo I.

EAT

People often come off the motorway for Mugello's famed food. Here are a few favourite pit stops.

Badia di Moscheta

⌂ Via di Moscheta 898, Firenzuola Σ agriturismo-la-selva-di-frena.eatbu.com

¡¡¡

La Selva di Frena

⌂ Via Frena 1422, Firenzuola ¢ Mon & Tue Σ laselvadifrena.com

¡¡¡

Il Paiolo

⌂ Via Cornocchio 1F, Barberino di Mugello ¢ Tue Σ ilpaiolo.eu

¡¡¡

Experience More

Google Map

2
Borgo San Lorenzo

V @ n Piazzale Lavacchini 1; 055 845 62 30

Substantially rebuilt after an earthquake in 1919, this is the largest town of the Mugello. The parish church, the **Pieve di San Lorenzo**, has an odd Romanesque campanile, circular in its lower stages and hexagonal above. In the apse, the wall paintings (1906) are by the Art Nouveau artist Galileo Chini.

The interior of the **Villa Pecori Giraldi** incorporates splendid Art Nouveau features by the Chini family dating from the mid-19th century onwards. The building hosts the Museo Chini – a collection of vases, plates and other decorative items made by the family's firm of artistic manufacturers. Also in the villa is an interactive museum for children, with rooms dedicated to music, science, art and exploration. To the west of Borgo San Lorenzo is the Castello del Trebbio, with beautiful gardens.

Pieve di San Lorenzo

⌂ Via Cocchi 4 # Daily

"

Villa Pecori Giraldi

⌂ Piazzale Lavacchini 1 § 055 845 62 30 # Museo Chini: 9am–1pm & 3–7pm Thu–Sun; reservations recommended Σ museochini.it

Google Map

3
Vicchio

V n Piazza Giotto 4; 324 907 08 57

▲ Castello del Trebbio, a Medici villa built for Cosimo il Vecchio

The peaceful town of Vicchio is where Giotto, who pioneered the break from stylized Byzantine art towards a naturalistic style, was born in 1267. His birthplace, the **Casa di Giotto**, is an idyllic spot just outside the town. It has displays about the artist and exhibitions of local art. Close to the house is the attractive 13th-century church of San Martino and the Sentiero dei Pittori footpath that links to the centre as well as to the bridge where, according to Italian painter Vasari, the artist Cimabue came across the young Giotto's intent on drawing a sheep; Cimabue then became a mentor to the shepherd boy. Beato Angelico was also born in Vicchio and the town's museum, the **Museo di Arte Sacra Beato Angelico**, houses religious art brought here from rural churches in the area to protect it. There are combined entry tickets for the Giotto house and the Fra Angelico museum.

"

Casa di Giotto

⌂ Località Vespignano § 055 84 47 82 # 10am–1pm & 3–7pm Sun (pre-booking required)

"

Museo di Arte Sacra Beato Angelico

⌂ Piazza Don Milani # 10am–2pm Thu & Fri, 10am–7pm Sat, 10am–1pm & 2–6pm Sun

Insider tip

Barberino Outlet

With 120 shops, including some top labels and brands, this retail park is a popular day trip for shoppers. There's a handy shuttle bus service from Florence with a journey time of just 30 minutes.

Google Map

4

Scarperia

@ n Piazza dei Vicari 1 Σ prolocoscarperia.it

▲ Entering the Palazzo dei Vicari in Scarperia, with its Renaissance frescoes

The town of Scarperia has been an important centre for blade-making since the 16th century and several artisans (such as Giglio at Via delle Oche 48) still practise the craft, making beautiful knives of all kinds, cutlery and other related items. The **Museo dei Ferri Taglienti** is a modern, interactive museum dedicated to the art of knife-making that can be found within the Palazzo dei Vicari on the central piazza. This statuesque 14th-century building has a striking façade studded with the heraldic shields of past governors (including terracottas by the Della Robbia school); a frescoed

interior, and a bell tower clock by Brunelleschi.

"

Museo dei Ferri Taglienti

⌂ Piazza dei Vicari # 10am–1pm & 2:30–6:30pm Thu–Mon Σ museoferritaglientiscarperia.it

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Google Map

5

Palazzuolo sul Senio

@ n Piazza Alpi 2; 055 804 61 25

▲ The Palazzo dei Capitani (Palace of the Captains) in Palazzuolo sul Senio

The Senio river runs through this pretty and peaceful village characterized by grey stone houses and surrounded by wooded hillsides with plenty of opportunities for walking and mountain biking. In the village, the late 14th-century **Palazzo dei Capitani** hosts the Museo delle Genti di Montagna, which is dedicated to local mountain life, and the Museo Archeologico Alto Mugello, with local archaeological finds.

The church of Santo Stefano has decorations by the Chini school and there is an admirable *Via Crucis* by Tito Chini in Santi Antonio da Padova e Carlo Borromeo church.

Palazzo dei Capitani

⌂ Piazza Alpi 4 § 055 804 60 08 # Hours vary, call ahead

Google Map

6
Marradi

V n Via Castelnaudary 5

▲ The Lamone river, flowing past the town of Marradi, famed for its chestnuts

The town of Marradi stands on the Lamone river. It has a more elegant character than other towns and villages of the Apennines, thanks to the noble families who built grand palazzi such as the 16th-century Palazzo Torriani (now a hotel), which includes Art Nouveau decorations by Galileo Chini.

Surrounded by woodland, Marradi is particularly famous for its exceptional chestnuts, celebrated at an annual festival held in October, and for its good food in traditional trattorias. It's also a great base for walkers, with footpaths that include a relatively unchallenging route that leads from the centre to the ruins of the 6th-century hilltop castle, Rocca di Castiglionchio, with great views.

Insider tip
Lago di Bilancino

A ten-minute drive from Parco di Pratolino, this lake is an idyllic place to cool off in summer. Its nature reserve has birdwatching trails while the Bahia Café and pizzeria has loungers, perfect for watching the sunset.

Google Map

7 -
Parco Mediceo di Pratolino

⌂ Via Fiorentina 276, Pratolino @ # Apr–Oct: 10am–8pm Fri–Sun

In the early 19th century the Grand Duke of Tuscany Ferdinand III demolished the original villa here, built for Francesco I de’ Medici in 1568, due to its poor state of repair. However, he also transformed the vast estate into a beautiful landscaped garden, with a good network of footpaths meandering past fountains, artificial caves and areas of woodland. The hexagonal chapel by Bernardo Buontalenti and the towering statue by Giambologna of a giant, representing the Apennines, are among the remaining 16th-century features while the former stables now host an exhibition of Medici theatre equipment.

STAY

Locanda Senio

Comfortable country chic style, with a traditional restaurant, a small wellness suite and an open-air pool.

⌂ **Via Borgo dell'Ore 1, Palazzuolo sul Senio** Σ locandasenio.com

iii

Castello di Nipozzano

Four exclusive guest rooms are attached to the 11th-century Nipozzano castle and wine estate.

⌂ **Via di Nipozzano, Pelago** Σ en.frescobaldi.com

iii

Monsignor della Casa

Country resort and spa set within a vast estate. Guests can stay in a 15th-century castle featuring ten rooms and its own saltwater pool.

⌂ **Via di Mucciano 7, Borgo san Lorenzo** Σ monsignordellacasa.com

iii

Google Map

8

Prato

V @ n Piazza del Comune; 0574 183 78 59

Prato has been one of Italy's most important textile-manufacturing cities since the 13th century. It also attracts pilgrims from all over Italy, who come to see the Virgin's Girdle, a prized relic kept in the **Duomo** on the main square. The Pulpit of the Holy Girdle is to the right of the church's façade, its frieze of dancing cherubs by Donatello (1438). Inside, the first chapel on the left holds the Virgin's Girdle, which is displayed from the pulpit on religious holidays. Frescoes by Agnolo Gaddi (1392–5) relate how the girdle reached Prato. In 1141, a local merchant married a woman from Palestine who had inherited it from the Apostle Thomas. The Virgin herself had let the girdle, a length of knotted cord, fall from the sky into Thomas's hands at the time of the Assumption.

Donatello's original panels for the Pulpit of the Holy Girdle are on display in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. The museum also houses the reliquary (1446) made for the Girdle by Maso di Bartolomeo, and *St Lucy* by Filippino Lippi.

Just off the central Piazza del Comune, the **Museo Civico** houses the altar painting *The Story of the Holy Girdle*, by Bernardo Daddi

(1312–48), and Filippo Lippi's *Madonna del Ceppo* (c 1452–3).

Prato's second important church, **Santa Maria delle Carceri**, stands on the site of a prison *(carceri)* on whose wall an image of the Virgin miraculously appeared in 1484. With its harmoniously proportioned interior, the domed church (1485–1506) is a fine work by Giuliano da Sangallo. Andrea della Robbia created the blue-and-white glazed terracotta roundels of the *Evangelists* (1490). To the right of the church is the Castello dell'Imperatore (1237), built by the German Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II during his campaign to conquer Italy.

The history of Prato's textile industry is charted in the **Museo del Tessuto**. Located on the city's southern outskirts, it houses historic looms and examples of lush Renaissance velvets, embroidery, lace and damask.

Near the Prato Est Autostrada exit, in an interesting modern building, the **Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci** is used for changing displays of contemporary art, concerts and films.

▲ Prato's Duomo, the Cattedrale di Santo Stefano

Duomo

⌂ Piazza Duomo § 0574 93 06 23 # Duomo: daily; Museo dell'Opera del Duomo: noon–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun

" '

Museo Civico

⌂ Palazzo Pretorio, Piazza del Comune § 0574 183 78 60 # 10:30am–6pm Wed–Mon

Santa Maria delle Carceri

⌂ Piazza delle Carceri # 6:45am–noon, 4–7pm daily

Museo del Tessuto

⌂ Via Puccetti 3 # Tue–Sun Σ museodeltessuto.it

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Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci

⌂ Viale della Repubblica 277 # 11am–8pm Wed–Sun Σ centropecci.it

Did You Know?

Prato is the birthplace of *cantucci*, the almond biscuits Tuscans love to dip into sweet Vin Santo wine.

Google Map

9
The Casentino

V @

The vast Casentino region, an area of tiny villages among hills covered with ancient woodland, lies to the north of Arezzo. The River Arno rises here, on the slopes of Monte Falterona. Countless streams run down the valleys to join it, creating stunning waterfalls.

Another attraction of the area is its selection of historic working monasteries, such as Camaldoli and La Verna, where the various orders continue to offer hospitality to travellers and make and sell produce. The ecclesiastical buildings make a good focal point for woodland walks, especially in autumn: the area is renowned for its abundant mushroom crops.

Google Map

10 " -
Camaldoli Monastery

@ # Pharmacy: 9am–12:30pm & 2–6pm daily Σ camaldoli.it

▲ The tranquil Camaldoli Monastery, which lies deep in ancient woods

This Casentino monastery was founded in 1046 and today houses 40 Carthusian monks. The original *eremo* (hermitage) lies 2.5 km (1.5 miles) up a narrow, winding road from the monastic complex through dense ancient forest; some of the most ecologically rich in Europe, it has been a National Park since 1991. The monks still tend this magnificent beech and chestnut woodland, as their predecessors have done for nearly 1,000 years.

The hermitage dates back to 1012 when San Romualdo (St Rumbold) came here with a small group of followers to cut themselves off completely from the outside world. The monks lead a more gregarious life now, running a small café in the monastery below and making soaps, toiletries and liqueurs that they sell in their pharmacy.

Did You Know?

The poet William Wordsworth and writer Mary Shelley both visited Vallombrosa.

Google Map

11 \

La Verna Monastery

@ # Hours vary, check website Σ laverna.it

The rocky outcrop on which La Verna monastery stands, surrounded by woodland, was split, according to legend, by an earthquake when Christ died on the Cross. The site was given to St Francis in 1213 by Count Orlando Cattani, and it was here, in 1224, that the saint was miraculously marked with the stigmata – the wounds of Christ.

Today the monastery complex, with its churches, chapels and museum, is both a popular tourist destination and a charismatic religious centre. There is accommodation for both travellers and pilgrims, the refectory serves meals all year round, and the monks make and sell cosmetics, natural remedies and liqueurs.

Google Map

12 '

Vallombrosa Abbey

@ Σ monaci.org

Although a short way outside the Casentino, Vallombrosa shares the characteristics of its woodland monasteries, and walks to and around the abbey are very scenic, with plenty of picnic spots. The Vallombrosan order was founded by St Giovanni Gualberto Visdomini in 1038. He aimed to persuade like-minded aristocrats to join him in relinquishing their wealth and adopting a life of great austerity. Contrary to these worthy ideals, the order grew wealthy and powerful during the 16th and 17th centuries. It was then that this fortress-like abbey was built.

Today's monks have a more modest and tranquil lifestyle, tending to the arboretum and herb gardens and producing liqueurs, jam, honey, cosmetics and even gin, on sale at the Antica Farmacia. This and the general areas of the abbey, including the frescoed church and a museum, are open daily. Visits to the monastic quarters and the magnificent library can be arranged through tour companies or by appointment.

Footpaths and mountain bike routes

Both the Mugello and Casentino areas offer a wealth of tracks and trails of all kinds, including ancient cobbled roads through woodland. Although both areas have plenty of steep mountain slopes, there is also a good choice of

paths for an easy stroll. It's excellent mountain biking territory too (*mugellotoscana.it*).

 Google Map

13
Poppi

£ @ n Via Cesare Battisti 13; 3488 84 02 99

▲ The fortified town of Poppi, commanding strategic views over the Casentino

The older part of Poppi is located high above the town's bus and train termini. Its castle, the imposing **Castello di Poppi**, can be seen from up to 5 km (3 miles) away. Just south of the town is the **Parco Zoo della Fauna Europa**, a woodland nature reserve focused on the conservation of endangered European species such as the Apennine wolf and the lynx.

Visible from Poppi, a short drive to the northwest up the Arno valley, is the 11th-century Castello di Romena, where Dante stayed as a guest of the local rulers in the early 14th century. Romena's *pieve*, dating to 1152, is a typical example of a Romanesque village church.

"

Castello di Poppi

§ 3394 25 78 40 # Hours vary, call ahead

"

Parco Zoo della Fauna Europa

⌂ Via del Parco Zoo 16 # 10am–sunset daily Σ parcozoopoppi.it

stay

Il Borro

Il Borro offers country chic accommodation in charming stone houses around a stunning medieval village, plus self-catering villas elsewhere on the estate. Non-residents are welcome to shop at the craft workshops or join a wine-tasting tour. There's a choice of dining, a spa, two pools, horse riding and golf.

⌂ **Località Borro 1, San Giustino Valdarno** Σ ilborro.it

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Google Map

14

Caprese Michelangelo

@ n Via Capoluogo 1; 0575 79 37 76

Michelangelo Buonarroti was born in Caprese on 6 March 1475, while his father served as the town's *podestà* – a combination of magistrate, mayor and chief of police. His birthplace is now a museum, the **Museo Casa Natale Michelangelo**, housing photos and copies of the artist's work. The town walls feature modern sculptures and have fine views over the alpine landscape. Michelangelo attributed his keen mind to the mountain air he breathed here as a child.

"

Museo Casa Natale Michelangelo

⌂ Casa del Podestà, Via Capoluogo 1 # Hours vary, check website Σ casanatalemichelangelo.it

Insider tip

Palio della Balestra

Held in Sansepolcro, this festival, which dates from the time of the Renaissance, involves a colourful costumed crossbow tournament between Sansepolcro locals and rivals from the Umbrian town of Gubbio. It takes place in the Piazza Torre di Berta on the second Sunday of September.

Google Map

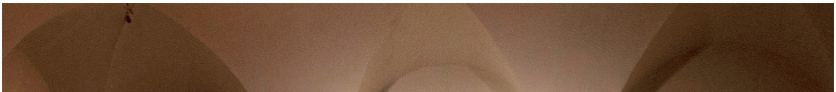
15

Sansepolcro

@ n Via Matteotti 10

Sansepolcro is a busy industrial town, famous as the birthplace of the artist Piero della Francesca (1410–92). The building in which he was born, on Via Aggiunti, houses a small foundation dedicated to his work, but sadly not the life-sized fresco *Hercules* he painted on the first floor; this was taken down and transported to a museum in Boston, USA in the early 20th century. However, the **Museo Civico**, housed in the 14th-century Palazzo Comunale, contains a fine collection of his work. The most famous is the fresco *The Resurrection* (1463), in which a curiously impassive Christ strides out of his tomb. The sleeping soldiers at his feet, in their Renaissance armour, seem trapped in time, while the son of God takes possession of a primitive, eternal landscape. The soldier in brown, second from the left, is thought to be a self-portait of the artist. Other works by Piero are displayed in the same room, notably the *Madonna della Misericordia* (1462).

Sansepolcro is home to a number of other major works. Don’t miss Luca Signorelli’s 15th-century *Crucifixion* (also in the Museo Civico) and Rosso Fiorentino’s Mannerist *Deposition*, in San Lorenzo church on Via Santa Croce.



▲ Piero della Francesca's masterly *Resurrection*, in Sansepolcro's Museo Civico

"

Museo Civico

⌂ Via N. Aggiunti 65 # 9:30am–1pm & 2:30–7pm daily Σ

museocivicosansepolcro.it

Google Map

16

Anghiari

@ n Corso Matteotti 103; 0575 74 92 79

▲ Lights appearing at dusk to illuminate the medieval town of Anghiari

Surrounded by sturdy stone walls, the medieval town of Anghiari makes a striking sight. Anghiari came under Florentine rule in 1440 after a famous battle against the Milanese, the subject of a lost fresco Leonardo was commissioned to paint in Florence's Palazzo Vecchio.

Several major works, including Jacopo della Quercia's fine wooden *Madonna* (1420), can be seen at the **Museo Statale di Palazzo Taglieschi**. There are also displays of locally made furniture and toys.

Santa Maria delle Grazie is the town's main church. Dating to the 18th century, it contains a High Altar and tabernacle from the della Robbia workshops and a 15th-century *Madonna and Child* painted by Matteo di Giovanni.

The Misericordia, a charitable organization, was founded in the 13th century to look after ailing pilgrims on their way to Rome. Today, it operates Tuscany's ambulance service. A small museum here, the **Museo della Misericordia**, records their work.

"

Museo Statale di Palazzo Taglieschi

⌂ Piazza Mameli # Hours vary

Santa Maria delle Grazie

⌂ Via Propositura # Daily

Museo della Misericordia

⌂ Via Francesco Nenci 13 § 0575 787 023 # 3–6pm Sat, 9:30am–12:30pm

& 3–6pm Sun & hols; weekdays by appointment

Did You Know?

Despite it involving thousands of troops, only one person was killed in the Battle of Anghiari.

Monterchi

A ten-minute drive southeast of Anghiari, the village of Monterchi contains a cemetery chapel chosen in 1460 by Piero della Francesca for his *Madonna del Parto* (Pregnant Madonna), possibly because his mother may be buried here. The restored fresco, with its haunting portayal of a weary, pensive Virgin, is now in the Museo Madonna del Parto on Via della Reglia. There is no entry charge for pregnant visitors.

Central Tuscany

▲ The rolling hills of the Chianti

Introduction

Area Map

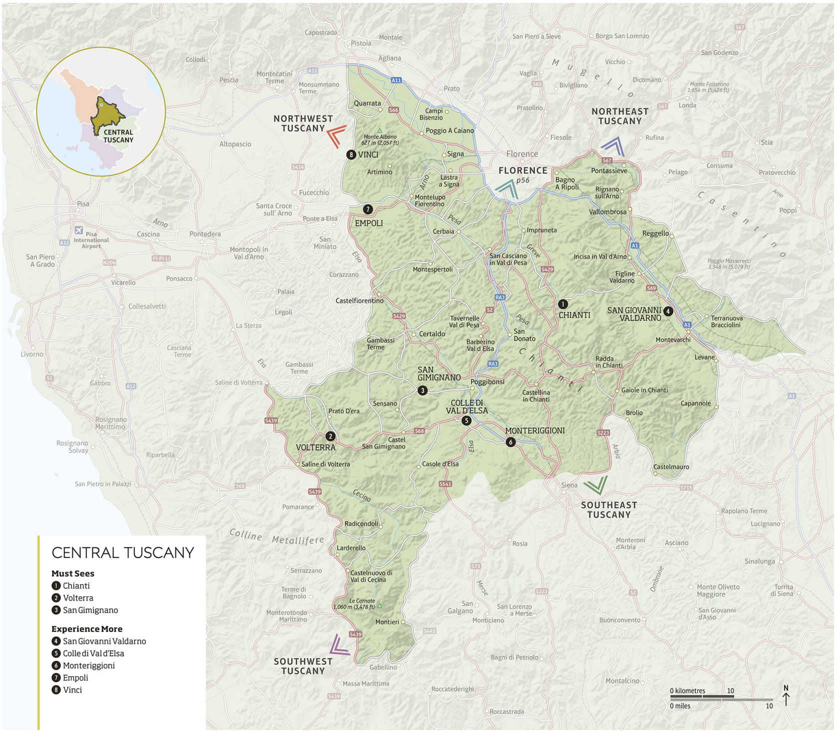
Must Sees

Experience More

Stretching between Florence and Siena, much of central Tuscany is taken up by the vine-clad hills and olive groves of the Chianti Classico area. Wine production began here in the ancient Etruscan era, at which time the local tradition of alabaster work was also established in Volterra. It was during the medieval period that wine-making became firmly established as a major trade – some of the wineries founded at this time, including Ricasoli and Antinori, are still in operation. Prosperity also came to the walled towns of San Gimignano and Monteriggioni thanks to their position on the Via Francigena, a pilgrimage route from Canterbury to Rome that passed through the western part of the region. Central Tuscany's position between Florence and Siena meant that it was caught in the middle of centuries of feuding between the two cities, and the hills are dotted with numerous castles and villas that grew out of the conflict. In recent years, many of these have been converted into wineries or prestigious holiday accommodation.

Area map

CENTRAL TUSCANY



n Double-tap image to read the labels

Must Sees

1 Chianti

2 Volterra

3 San Gimignano

Experience More

4 San Giovanni Valdarno

5 Colle di Val d'Elsa

6 Monteriggioni

7 Empoli

8 Vinci

Google Map

1

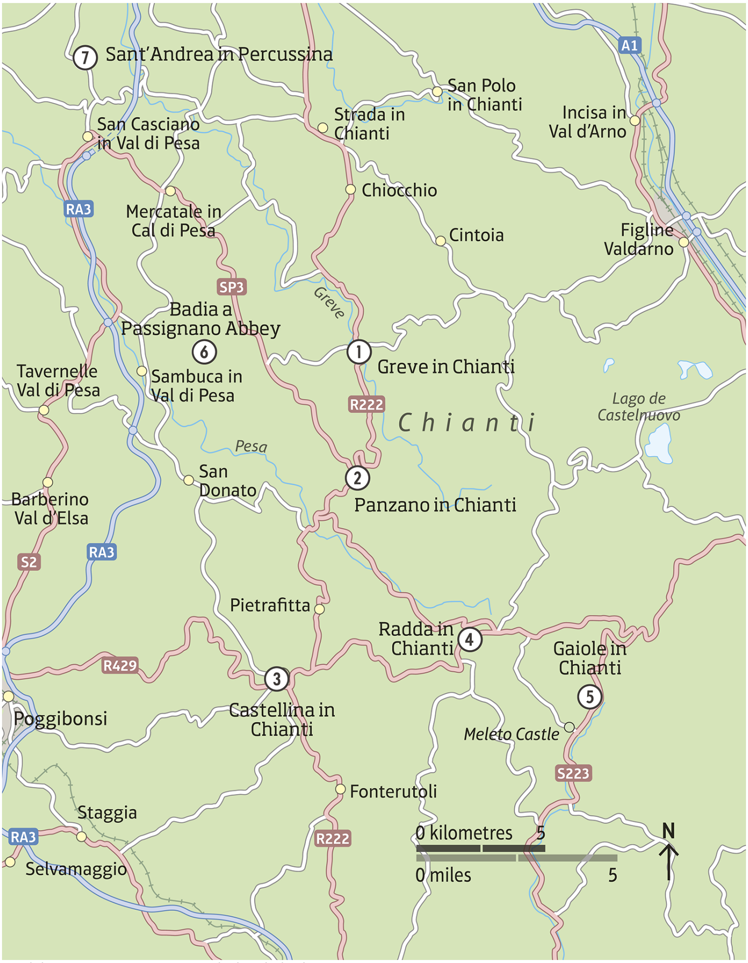
CHIANTI

Σ chianti.com

Chianti is one of Tuscany's best-known and most beautiful wine regions. The Medici Grand Duke Cosimo III first officially defined this vineyard-dotted stretch of countryside between Florence and Siena for Chianti wine production in 1716.

▲ The rolling hills of the Chianti

The gentle slopes and wide-open panoramas just south of Florence lead to more hilly terrain as you journey through Chianti towards Siena, with a proliferation of winding roads and quaint villages built in the typical honey-coloured stone. There are numerous historic abbeys and hilltop castles, many of which now house wineries and frequently offer tours, tastings and accommodation. Wine has been fundamental to the Chianti area for centuries, and the excellent Casa del Chianti Classico visitor centre in Radda is the perfect place to find out more.



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CHIANTI WINE GUIDE

Regular Chianti is made in much of Tuscany – such as in Pisa, Arezzo or Pistoia – but in 1932 the term “Classico” was added for wines made exclusively within the defined Chianti area. These prestigious wines must be made with at least 80 per cent Sangiovese grapes. A Chianti Classico Riserva is one of these wines, aged for 24 months, while a Gran Selezione is made from grapes grown on the same estate and is aged for 30 months.

Did You Know?

On average, around 38 million bottles of Chianti Classico are produced each year.

Google Map

1 \ - =

Greve in Chianti

@ n Piazza Matteotti 10; 055 854 62 99

Although larger than the other Chianti communities, Greve, which is named after the pretty river passing through the centre, is no less appealing. The town is focused around an unusual triangular piazza, lined with porticoes housing characterful restaurants, shops and bars. A panoramic road leads up to the delightful walled hilltop village of Montefioralle nearby.

Google Map

2 =

Panzano in Chianti

@ Σ panzano.com

This hilltop village in Chianti was thrust into fame by the Netflix series *Chef’s Table*, which showcases Dario Cecchini’s butcher-cum-restaurant on Via XX Luglio. A footpath from the village leads to the San Pietro alle Stinche church, hidden among the trees, which was once part of a medieval castle.

Eat

Here are three of Chianti's best butcher-restaurants.

Antica Macelleria Cecchini

⌂ Via XX Luglio 11, Panzano in Chianti # 9am-4pm daily Σ dariocecchini.com

¡¡¡

Macelleria Falorni

⌂ Piazza G Matteotti 66, Greve in Chianti # 9am-7pm Mon-Sat; 10am-9pm Sun Σ falorni.it

¡¡¡

Stiaccini

⌂ Via Ferrucio 33, Castellina in Chianti # 8:30am-2:30pm & 5-7:30pm ¢ Wed pm & Sun

¡¡¡

Google Map

3 \ - =

Castellina in Chianti

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Castellina in Chianti is reached via scenic roads that meander through the rolling Tuscan hills. Upon arrival, the attractive town centre is built around a 15th-century castle with an unusual tower that can be seen from miles around. The hilltop town, one of the largest in Chianti, can trace its origins back to Etruscan times, and there are still a handful of accessible ancient remains that visitors can explore. There is also a wide selection of places to drink, shop and eat, some of which can be found in the atmospheric underground walkway – Via della Volte – that winds beneath the walls of the town.

Google Map

4 \

Radda in Chianti

n Piazza Castello 6; 0577 738 494

Located at the heart of the Chianti region, hilltop Radda offers striking panoramas from its narrow side-streets, which host an assortment of traditional restaurants and bars. These include Casa Porciatti, a good butcher-restaurant run by the Prociatti family.

Radda became the centre of power in the Chianti region in 1384 and the Palazzo della Podestà, built in the 15th century and studded with coats of arms of past mayors, still houses the local authorities.

GALLO NERO

Chianti Classico's black cockerel symbol originates from a 13th-century attempt to fix the boundary between Florence and Siena at the place where a horseman from each of the cities met, having left at cockcrow. Florence's black cockerel woke early, having been starved for days beforehand. This gave the Florentine a headstart and he covered more ground, so the two met just south of Castellina.

Did You Know?

Records show that Chianti has exported wine to England since the 1600s.

Google Map

5 '
Gaiole in Chianti

n Via A. Casabianca, 25; 0577 749 411

This pretty village has a stream running around its centre. The numerous castles near Gaiole include Brolio, the largest winery in the Chianti Classico area, which was built in 1041 but owes its current Neo-Gothic style to 19th-century intervention by the influential Ricasoli wine-making family. Also within easy reach is the attractive 13th-century Meleto – with tours available through its frescoed rooms and wine cellar – and the Badia a Coltibuono estate, which comprises some 800 hectares filled with vines, olive trees

and good woodland walks.

Google Map

6
Badia a Passignano Abbey

Badia a Passignano

▲ The Badia a Passignano, an 11th-century abbey complex in Chianti

The impressive structure of this isolated 11th-century abbey complex incorporates additions from successive centuries, including a 15th-century cloister and towers. It was founded on a stretch of road between Greve in Chianti and Sambuca, another tiny town in the region. The interior features some admirable frescoes, including the *Last Supper* by the Ghirlandaio brothers in the refectory.

Google Map

7 \
Sant'Andrea in Percussina

@

Lying not far from the medieval hill town of San Casciano Val di Pesa, this hamlet is where the exiled Niccolò Machiavelli wrote his famous political treatise, *The Prince* (1513). The wine estate owned by Machiavelli and his family, the 500-year-old Villa Machiavelli, continues to produce Chianti Classico, and his house and garden are open for tours.

TOP 3

CHIANTI VINEYARDS

Badia a Coltibuono
⌂ Gaiole in Chianti
An organic winery in an 11th-century abbey.

Antinori
⌂ San Casciano Val di Pesa
One of Tuscany's leading winemakers.

Castello di Volpaia
⌂ Radda in Chianti
Wine has been made here since 1172.

Google Map

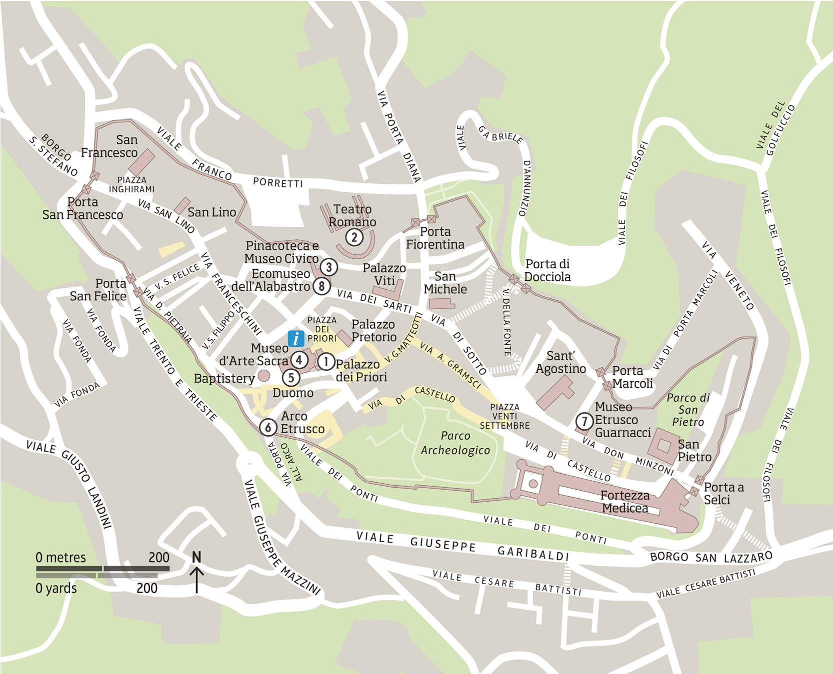
2

VOLTERRA

n Piazza dei Priori 20; volterratur.it

Situated, like many Etruscan cities, on a high plateau, Volterra offers uninterrupted views over the surrounding hills. In many places the ancient Etruscan walls still stand, and the renowned Museo Guarnacci contains one of the best collections of Etruscan artifacts in Italy, with numerous exhibits gathered from local tombs. The city is also famed for its artisans, who carve beautiful white statues from locally mined alabaster.

▲ The tightly packed streets and jumbled red rooftops of Volterra



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Google Map

1 "

Palazzo dei Priori

⌂ Piazza dei Priori 1 § 0588 860 50 # Summer: 9am–7pm daily; winter: 10am–4:30pm daily

This fine palazzo (built 1208–57) bears a close resemblance to the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. It is the oldest civic building in Tuscany, and still houses Volterra's local authorities. Parts of the interior are open to the public and the frescoes on the first floor include the 1383 *Annunciation in the Sala del Consiglio*. The views from the bell tower are impressive.

Google Map

2 "

Teatro Romano

⌂ Piazza Caduti nei Lager Nazisti # Mid-Mar–mid-Nov: 10:30am–5:30pm

daily; mid-Nov–mid-Mar: 10am–4:30pm daily

Just outside the city walls, the ancient Roman theatre – which dates to the 1st century BCE – is one of the best-preserved theatres in Italy. Enough of the original structure has survived to enable an almost complete reconstruction. The theatre remains closed to visitors during heavy rain.

Google Map

3 "

Pinacoteca e Museo Civico

⌂ Via dei Sarti 1 § 0588 875 80 # Mid-Mar–Oct: 9am–7pm daily; Nov–mid-Mar: 10am–4:30pm daily ¢ 25 Dec

Volterra's excellent art gallery is situated in the 15th-century Palazzo Minucci-Solaini. There is a significant emphasis on Florentine artists, who are responsible for many of the gallery's best works. In Ghirlandaio's *Christ in Majesty* (1492), Christ hovers above an idealized Tuscan landscape. It was meant for the San Giusto monastery, which was abandoned after a landslip like the one shown in the middle distance of the work and beyond. Luca Signorelli's *Madonna and Child with Saints* (1491) shows his debt to Roman art through the reliefs on the base of the Virgin's throne, while his delicate *Annunciation* (1491) is another beautiful composition.

The museum's main exhibit is Rosso Fiorentino's Mannerist work *The Deposition* (1521). Attention is focused on the grief-stricken figures in the foreground and the pallid, empty shell of Christ's body, its dead weight symbolizing that his spirit is elsewhere.

Tickets for the Pinacoteca e Museo Civico also allow entry into the Ecomuseo dell' Alabastro.

▲ *The Deposition* (1521) by Rosso Fiorientino, in the Pinacoteca e Museo Civico

Did You Know?

The alabaster festival is held near the feast day for St Luke, patron saint of artisanal workers.

 Google Map

4 "

Museo d'Arte Sacra

⌂ Chiesa di Sant'Agostino # Hours vary, check website Σ museodiocesanovolterra.com

This museum, which relocated to the church of Sant'Agostino in 2017, contains sculpture and architectural fragments from the Duomo, which is also known for its art, and artworks from other local churches.

The main exhibit is a 15th-century della Robbia terracotta of St Linus, Volterra's patron saint. The collection also has a range of church bells from the 11th to the 15th centuries, as well as some church silver and several intricate illuminated manuscripts.

VOLTERRA'S ALABASTER

The locally quarried alabaster, prized for its smooth translucency, was once known as the ”stone of the gods” and has been worked in Volterra since Etruscan times. A number of crafts studios in the city still make and sell items in alabaster, including Alab'Arte *(Via Don Minzoni 18)*. Volterra even hosts a three-day alabaster festival each October, which features everything from exhibitions to music.

Google Map

5
Duomo

⌂ Piazza San Giovanni # Daily

Work on Volterra’s cathedral began in 1120, on the site of a pre-existing church, and continued intermittently over the next two centuries.

Inside the cathedral, a Romanesque wood-carving of *The Deposition* (1228) stands to the right of the High Altar. The altar itself is flanked by graceful marble angels carved by Mino da Fiesole in 1471; they face an elegant tabernacle, by the same artist, which is adorned with the figures of Faith, Hope and Charity.

The nave, remodelled in 1581, has an unusual coffered ceiling with stucco figures of bishops and saints painted in rich blue and

gold. The pulpit, in the middle of the nave, dates from 1584, but was created using sculptural reliefs from the late 12th and early 13th centuries. The *Last Supper* panel, facing into the nave and thought to be the work of the Pisan artist Guglielmo Pisano, has a number of humorous details, including a monster snapping at the heels of Judas. Nearby, in the north aisle, Fra Bartolomeo's *The Annunciation* (1497) hangs above an altar in one of the side chapels.

More sculptures are housed in the oratory off the north aisle, near the main entrance. The best is a tableau of the Epiphany, preserved behind glass. The remarkably humane painted terracotta figures of the Virgin and Child in the foreground are believed to be by Zaccaria da Volterra (1473–1544), a local sculptor.

▲ Visitors gathering outside the Romanesque façade of Volterra's Duomo

GREAT VIEW

Roman Remains

The best viewing point to see the remains of Volterra's Roman baths, which date from the 4th century, and theatre is off Via Guarnacci. This ancient site was covered up during the Middle Ages and excavations only began in the 1950s.

Google Map

6
Arco Etrusco

Follow Via Porta all'Arco from the centre of Volterra to find the Arco Etrusco, which once formed part of the city's ancient walls. One of Volterra's more unusual sights, the Etruscan arch is in fact part Roman.

Only the columns and the severely weathered basalt heads, representing Etruscan gods, date to the 6th-century BCE original. The features of each head are now barely visible, and though many legends surround them, no one can say for certain what they were intended to represent.

Did You Know?

The language of the Etruscans has not yet been fully deciphered, so some artifacts remain unread.

Google Map

7 " ' =
Museo Etrusco Guarnacci

⌂ Via Don Minzoni 15 § 0588 863 47 # 9am–7pm daily (Nov–mid-Mar: 10am–4:30pm) ¢ 1 Jan, 25 Dec

The pride of the Guarnacci Museum is its collection of 600 Etruscan funerary urns. Intricately carved, they offer a unique insight into Etruscan customs and beliefs.

The museum's two main exhibits are on the first floor. Room 20 contains the terracotta "Married Couple" urn, on which the elderly couple atop the lid are portrayed realistically, with careworn faces. Room 22 contains the elongated bronze known as *Ombra della Sera* (Shadow of the Evening), a name given by the poet Gabriele d'Annunzio, who said that the bronze reminded him of the shadow thrown by a human figure in the dying light of the evening sun. It probably dates from the 3rd century BCE, but it is difficult to confirm this as the figure was cast with no clothes or jewellery to indicate rank, status or date. Indeed, it is only by chance that it survived. Ploughed up by a farmer in 1879, it was used as a fire

poker until someone recognized it as a masterpiece of Etruscan art.

▲ Exhibits on display at the Museo Etrusco Guarnacci

The Etruscans

Tuscany is named after the Etruscans, who settled central Italy around the 8th century BCE, from northern Lazio to the Umbrian Apennines. Little is known about them beyond scant Roman records and a handful of surviving (mostly funerary) artifacts. According to myth, they came from Asia Minor (along with Tuscany's familiar cypress tree), enjoyed an advanced culture, with relative equality between the sexes, and excelled at engineering – they taught the Romans the art of draining land for farming. Many aspects of Roman religion can be attributed to the Etruscans, including animal sacrifice and divination. After a fierce war with Rome, the Etruscans came under Roman rule, signalling their end as a distinct civilization.

Google Map

8

Ecomuseo dell'Alabastro

⌂ Via dei Sarti

Housed in the 13th-century Torre Minucci, adjacent to Palazzo Minucci Solaini and the Pinacoteca, this museum recounts the history of alabaster in the Volterra area from Etruscan times to the present day, covering techniques and materials, styles, and the social and economic conditions of alabaster workers. The most noteworthy exhibit is an ancient Etruscan funerary urn in alabaster.

Google Map

3

San Gimignano

@ Porta San Giovanni n Piazza del Duomo 1; sangimignano.com

The "city of beautiful towers" – which were built in the 13th century both as a display of wealth and to serve as private fortresses – is one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Tuscany. Its main square is ringed by a jumble of unspoiled 13th- and 14th-century palazzi, while the two major streets, Via San Matteo and Via San Giovanni, still retain their medieval feel.

▲ San Gimignano's skyline, bristling with medieval towers

▲ The historic centre of hilly San Gimignano

 Google Map

1 "
Duomo

⌂ Piazza del Duomo # Hours vary, check website Σ
duomosangimignano.it

The plain façade of this 12th-century Romanesque church belies its interior – it is one of the most frescoed churches in Italy. Further art from the Duomo is found in the Museo d'Arte Sacra, accessed via the Piazza Pecori.

 Google Map

2

Rocca di Montestaffoli

⌂ Via della Rocca 6 # Daily

The 14th-century Rocca, or fortress, now has only one surviving tower, following its dismantling by Cosimo I de' Medici in the 16th century. It encloses a peaceful public garden which is filled with fig and olive trees.

Google Map

3 "

Museo Civico

⌂ Palazzo Comunale § 0577 28 63 00 # 10am–7:30pm daily

This museum is housed in the Palazzo del Popolo (town hall). Its tower, finished in 1311, is the tallest in the town, at 54 m (175 ft); it is open to the public and offers stunning views. In the first public room, the Sala di Dante, an inscription records the poet's plea to the city council in 1300 to support the Florence-led Guelph (pro-Pope) alliance. The floor above has a small art collection, with a selection of works by Pinturicchio and Memmo di Filippucci.

Google Map

4 "

Sant'Agostino

⌂ Piazza Sant'Agostino § 0577 90 43 13 # Hours vary, call ahead

Consecrated in 1298, this church's simple façade contrasts sharply with the heavily decorated Rococo interior, which dates from around 1740. Of note in the Cappella di San Bartolo is an elaborate marble altar, completed by Benedetto da Maiano in 1495.

Drink

Vernaccia di San Gimignano Wine Museum

Try San Gimignano's famed white wine (and lesser-known reds, rosé and Vin Santo) at this regional wine museum. A fascinating multimedia experience also recounts the history and culture surrounding the wines.

⌂ **Via della Rocca 1** Σ sangimignanomuseovernaccia.com

Experience More

Google Map

4
San Giovanni Valdarno

V n Piazza Cavour 3

Tuscany’s most important river, the Arno, gives its name to the Valdarno area and San Giovanni is the most important of the new towns built by the Florentines in the late 13th century. The striking Palazzo d’Arnolfo, which dates from the town’s founding, houses the Museo delle Terre Nuove, dedicated to the phenomenon of new towns in medieval Europe. Della Robbia terracottas are among those decorating the palazzo to recall successive rulers.

Renaissance pioneer Masaccio was born here in 1401 and his birthplace, the Casa Masaccio, is now a centre for contemporary arts. The 15th-century Basilica di Santa Maria delle Grazie contains some impressive contemporary paintings, including an *Annunciation* by Fra Angelico; look out, in the atrium, for another Della Robbia terracotta.

Google Map

5
Colle di Val d’Elsa

V @ n Via del Castello 33; 0577 92 27 91

▲ The lovely upper town of Colle di Val d'Elsa, with the Santa Maria bell tower

Colle di Val d'Elsa has a lower and an upper town. The Mannerist Palazzo Campana, built on an aqueduct in 1539, forms a gateway to Colle Alta, the upper town, which is of great medieval architectural interest. In the modern lower town, shops sell locally made crystal glass. This has been a major glass-making centre since the 14th century and 98 per cent of Italy's crystal glass (and 14 per cent of the world's) is made here. The Museo del Cristallo (glass museum), located in an underground venue once occupied by the 18th-century crystal factory, has exhibits dating from the pre-industrial era. On the same street, Via del Castello, the Romanesque church of Santa Maria has a simple bell tower and a stone façade inlaid with brickwork. A tabernacle by Pier Francesco Fiorentino shows scenes from the lives of the Madonna and Child. Nearby in a pretty piazza is the Duomo, another simple yet dignified building.

Via Gracco del Secco is dominated at its eastern end by the Porta Nova. This large Renaissance fortress, with its two heavily fortified towers, was built in the 15th century to guard against attack from the Volterra road. Here is the monumental San Pietro complex of former monastic buildings; inside, the Museo San Pietro has Siena school paintings and some fine Etruscan pottery. There are some 14th-century hunting scenes by Bartolo di Fredi, and an early wooden crucifix by Marco Romano.

Insider Tip

Living History

Travel back in time at the Archeodromo Poggibonsi, a re-created 9th-century village that comes to life every Sunday afternoon with costumed “villagers” re-enacting ancient pastimes (*archeodromopoggibonsi.it*).

Google Map

6

Monteriggioni

@ n Piazza Roma 23; monteriggioniturismo.it

▲ Dining alfresco in the tranquil main square of Monteriggioni

Monteriggioni is a gem of a medieval hilltop town. It was a garrison town, encircled by high walls with 14 heavily fortified towers, built to guard the northern borders of Siena’s territory against invasion by Florentine armies.

The walls, still perfectly preserved, are best viewed from the Colle di Val d’Elsa road. Within, the sleepy village has a large piazza, a pretty Romanesque church, crafts shops, restaurants and shops selling the excellent local Castello di Monteriggioni wines.

Google Map

7

Empoli

n Via Giuseppe del Papa 41; 0571 757 622

An industrial town, Empoli is worth visiting for the excellent **Museo della Collegiata**, with its collection of Renaissance paintings and sculpture. Admire Masolino's *Pietà* fresco (1425) and a marble font by Rossellino, dating from 1447.

Empoli's arcaded main square, Piazza Farinata degli Uberti, is surrounded by 12th-century buildings, notably the church of Sant'Andrea, with its black-and-white marble façade. The large fountain (1827), with water nymphs and lions, is by Luigi Pampaloni.

In the Magazzino del Sale, a 14th-century salt warehouse on Via Ridolfi, the Museo del Vetro recounts the history of local glass-making, including displays of glass objects, particularly in the Empoli speciality green glass.

" ' -

Museo della Collegiata

⌂ Piazza della Propositura 3 § 0331 85 89 03 # 10am–1pm & 3–6pm Wed–Sun

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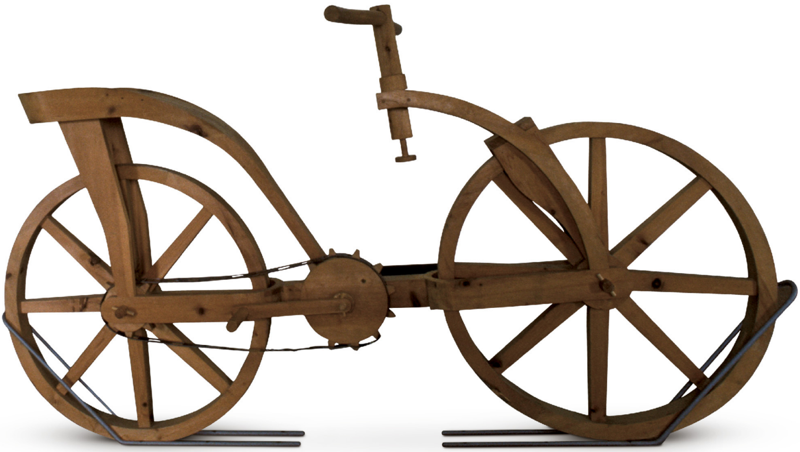
Google Map

8

Vinci

@ Σ toscananelcuore.it



▲ Wooden model made from the so-called "bicycle sketch" by Leonardo

This hilltop town was the birthplace of Leonardo (1452–1519). To celebrate his extraordinary genius, the 13th-century castle in the centre of the town is now the **Museo Leonardiano**. Among the displays are wooden models of Leonardo's machines and inventions, based on the drawings from his notebooks. These range from his conception of a car, to an armoured tank and even a machine-gun. A pair of skis, designed for walking on water, show that he could occasionally go wrong.

In nearby Santo Stefano church is the font in which Leonardo was baptized. His actual birthplace, the **Casa di Leonardo**, is 2 km (1 mile) from the town centre. Enjoy a walk through the poppy fields to this simple farmhouse.

" ' -

Museo Leonardiano

⌂ Castello dei Conti Guidi # 10am–7pm daily Σ museoleonardiano.it

" ' -

Casa di Leonardo

⌂ Anchiano § 0571 93 32 85 # Hours vary, call ahead

RENAISSANCE VILLAS

Built in 1480 for Lorenzo de' Medici, the Villa Medicea di Poggio a Caiano was Italy's first Renaissance-style villa. Today it hosts the Museo della Natura Morta still-life museum. The nearby Villa di Artimino, designed by Buontalenti in 1594, is known as the "Villa of a Hundred Chimneys" because of the ornate chimney pots crowding the roof. Now a hotel, it offers wine tastings.

Southeast Tuscany

▲ Hiking to Asciano through the clay hills of the Crete Senesi

Introduction

Area Map

Must Sees

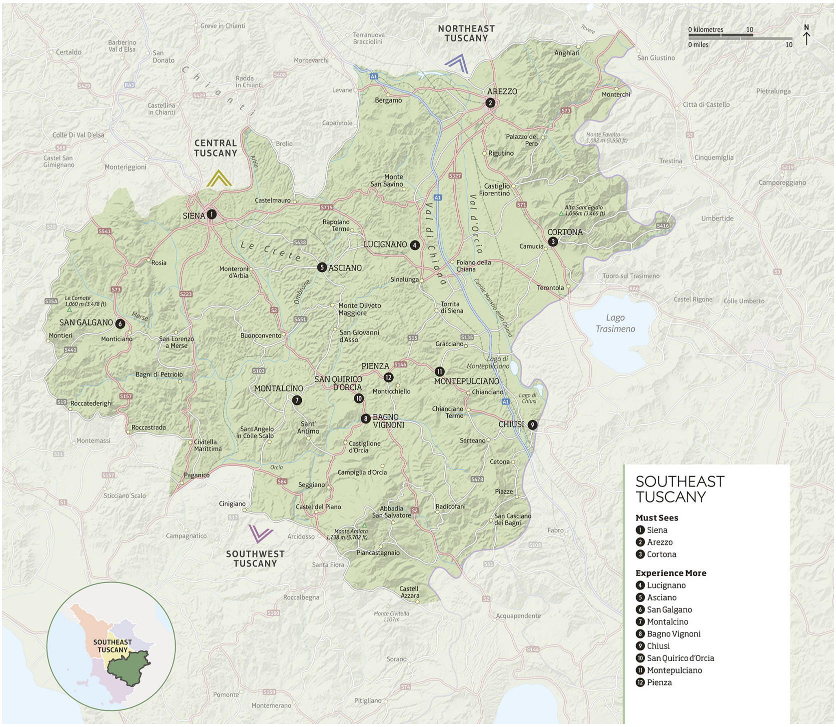
Experience More

Legend says that the spectacular city of Siena was founded by the son of Remus (who was founder, with his brother Romulus, of Rome). In reality, the hilly site was first settled by the Etruscans – along with Arezzo, Cortona and Chiusi, one of the most powerful centres of ancient Etruria – before becoming a military colony in Roman times. Siena grew in importance during the Middle Ages, thanks both to its location on the Via Francigena, an ancient pilgrimage route to Rome, and to its astute money-lending enterprises; Monte dei Paschi di Siena, founded in 1472, is the world's oldest operating bank. A thriving republic for four centuries, Siena was conquered in 1555 by long-term rival Florence, following a vicious siege.

Medici leader Lorenzo the Magnificent was a particular fan of this part of Tuscany, appreciating the tasty pecorino sheep's cheese from Pienza and enjoying the Val d'Orcia spa waters. Having remained largely rural with a low-profile wine-making industry, the region first released its prime product, Brunello di Montalcino, in 1865. Nowadays it is one of Italy's most prestigious wines.

Area map

Southeast Tuscany



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Must Sees

1 Siena

2 Arezzo

3 Cortona

Experience More

4 Lucignano

5 Asciano

6 San Galgano

7 Montalcino

8 Bagno Vignoni

9 Chiusi

0 San Quirico d’Orcia

q Montepulciano

w Pienza

Google Map

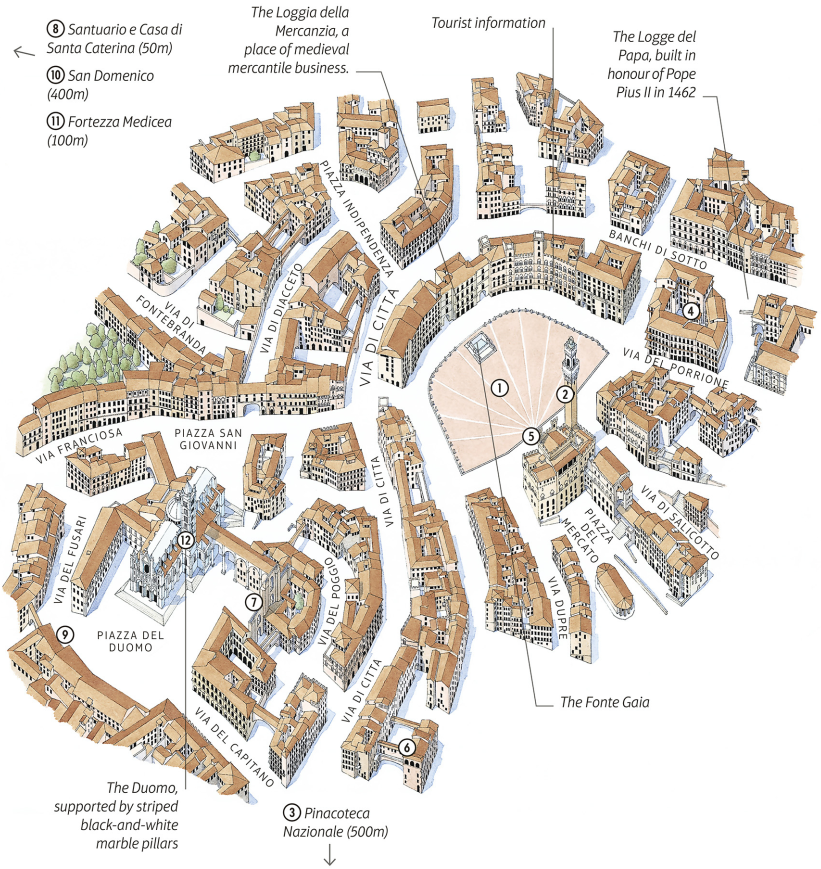
1

SIENA

V Piazzale Rosselli @ Piazza Grasmci n Piazza del Campo 56; 9am–7pm daily; 0577 28 05 51 Σ terresiena.it

Siena is a city of steep medieval alleys surrounding the Piazza del Campo. The buildings around the square symbolize the city's prosperity, between 1260 and 1348, when wealthy citizens contributed to a major programme of civic building. Siena's decline began in 1348 when the Black Death arrived, killing a third of the population; 200 years later, many more died when the Florentines sieged and eventually won the city. The victors repressed all further development in Siena, and the city largely remains frozen in time, crammed with renovated medieval buildings.

▲ Siena's medieval townhouses, built up the city's gentle slopes



▲ Siena’s historic core, centred around Piazza del Campo

Google Map

1

Piazza del Campo

The shell-shaped, 12th-century Piazza del Campo is bordered by elegant palazzi. Its focal point is an elaborate fountain: the Fonte Gaia, a rectangular marble basin decorated by statues. The fountain that can be seen today is a 19th-century copy of the original, which was carved by Jacopo della Quercia in 1409–19. This was removed to preserve it from the ravages of the weather. The reliefs on the fountain depict Adam and Eve, the Madonna and Child, and the Virtues. Water is fed into it by a 25-km- (15-mile-) long aqueduct,

which has brought fresh water into the city from the hills since the 14th century.

 Google Map

2 "

Torre del Mangia

⌂ Piazza del Campo § 0577 29 26 15 # 10am–7pm (mid-Nov–Feb: to 4pm)

The bell tower to the left of the Palazzo Pubblico is the second-highest in Italy, at 102 m (330 ft). Built by the brothers Muccio and Francesco di Rinaldo between 1338 and 1348, it is named after the first bell-ringer, who was nicknamed *Mangiaguadagni* (literally "eat the profits") because of his great idleness. (Since it was the bell-ringer's responsibility to warn the citizens of impending danger, this was worrisome.) There are 505 steps to the top of the tower, but climbers are rewarded with wonderful views across southeast Tuscany.

 Google Map

3 "

Pinacoteca Nazionale

⌂ Via San Pietro 29 § 0577 28 11 61 # 8:30am–1:30pm Fri–Mon, 2–7pm Tue–Thu ¢ 2nd & 3rd Sun of the month, 1 Jan

Housed in the 14th-century Palazzo Buonsignori, this gallery contains important works by the Siena school. Lorenzetti's *Two Views*, produced in the 14th century, are early examples of landscape painting, and Pietro da Domenico's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (1510) shows how the art of the Siena school remained stylized long after Renaissance naturalism had influenced the rest of Europe. There is also a striking *Deposition* (1502) by Sodoma.

STAY

Palazzo Borghesi
Fresco-lined rooms in a 15th-century palace.
⌂ **Via San Pietro 3** Σ palazzoborghesesiena.it

La Villa di STR
Refined, airy rooms in a delightful villa.
⌂ **Viale Vittorio Veneto 11** Σ lavilladistr.it

Hotel Santa Caterina
Comfortable hotel with a panoramic garden.
⌂ **Via Piccolomini 7** Σ hotelsantacaterinasiena.com

Castel di Pugna
An ancient castle overlooking olive groves.
⌂ **Strada Valdipuna 12/14** Σ casteldipugna.it

Google Map

4
Palazzo Piccolomini

⌂ Via Banchi di Sotto 52 § 0577 28 63 00 # Admission at 10am, 11:30am & noon Sat, by appt only ¢ Sun & public hols

This imposing palazzo was built in the 1460s by Rossellino for the wealthy Piccolomini family. It houses the state archives, including the Tavolette di Biccherna – 13th-century municipal ledgers, with covers by Sano di Pietro, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Domenico Beccafumi and others.

Google Map

5 "
Palazzo Pubblico

⌂ Piazza del Campo 1 § 0577 29 21 11

▲ Siena's Palazzo Pubblico, sat on the Piazza del Campo

The Palazzo Pubblico serves as the town hall, but the state rooms, which contain historic frescoes and works of art, are open to the public as part of the Museo Civico. The main council chamber is called the Sala del Mappamondo, after a map of the world painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the early 1300s. One wall is covered by Simone Martini's *Maestà* (Virgin in Majesty; 1315). Opposite is Martini's fresco of the mercenary Guidoriccio da Fogliano (1330). The walls of the adjacent chapel are covered with frescoes by Taddeo di Bartolo, and the choir stalls (1428) feature wooden panels inlaid with biblical scenes.

The Sala della Pace contains the famous *Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, a pair of 1338 frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti. The Sala del Risorgimento is covered with late 19th-century frescoes illustrating events leading up to the unification of Italy.

Google Map

6

Accademia Musicale Chigiana

⌂ Palazzo Chigi Saracini, Via di Città 89 # For concerts and exhibitions, check website for details Σ chigiana.org

Founded by Count Guido Chigi Saracini in 1932, the Accademia holds masterclasses for the principal musical instruments. Housed in one of Siena's finest buildings, there is also a fine art collection, a museum of musical instruments and a manuscript library.

Google Map

7 " ' =

Museo dell'Opera Metropolitana

⌂ Piazza del Duomo 8 # Mar–Oct: 9:30am–7:30pm daily; Nov–Feb: 10:30am–5:30pm daily Σ operaduomo.siena.it

This museum is built into the unfinished side aisle of the Duomo. Part of it houses sculptures from the exterior of the Duomo that had become eroded. Duccio's double-sided *Maestà*, one of the best Siena school works, has a room to itself. Painted in 1308–11, it depicts the Madonna and Child on one side and scenes from the Life of Christ on the other.

great View

Bird's-Eye View

The small balcony of the San Paolo pub *(Vicolo San Paolo 2)*, directly opposite the Torre del Mangia, is the very best place to go for views over the Campo. Come for a drink or panino.

THE PALIO OF SIENA

The Palio is Tuscany's most famous festival. It's a bareback horse race, first recorded in 1283, that takes place in the Piazza del Campo on 2 July and 16 August at 7pm. The jockeys represent 10 of Siena's 17 *contrade* (districts) and horses are chosen by drawing of lots. Preceded by days of colourful pageantry and heavy betting, the races last only 90 seconds. The winner is rewarded with a silk *palio* (banner). Animal rights campaigners have long lobbied to end the Palio, claiming the horses suffer from the heat and uproarious crowds.

 Google Map

8
Santuario e Casa di Santa Caterina

⌂ Costa di Sant'Antonio # 9am–noon & 3–5:30pm Σ caterinati.org

Siena's patron saint, Catherine Benincasa (1347–80), was the daughter of a tradesman. She took the veil as a teenager and became known for her letters and activism on behalf of the church. Her eloquence persuaded Gregory XI to return the seat of the papacy to Rome in 1376, after 67 years of exile in Avignon, France. She died in Rome and was canonized in 1461. Today, her house is surrounded by chapels and cloisters, and is decorated with paintings of her life by artists such as Pietro Sorri and Francesco Vanni, both her contemporaries.

 Google Map

9 " =
Santa Maria della Scala

⌂ Piazza del Duomo # Hours vary, check website Σ santamariadellascala.com

This former hospital is now a museum housing a collection of

paintings and sculpture. In the Sala del Pellegrino, frescoes by Domenico di Bartolo depict hospital scenes from the 1440s.

Google Map

0
San Domenico

⌂ Piazza San Domenico # Daily

This barn-like Gothic church was begun in 1226 and its bell tower was added in 1340. Inside is an exquisite chapel dedicated to St Catherine. This was built in 1460 to store the saint's preserved head, which is now kept in a gilded marble tabernacle on the altar, encircled by frescoes depicting her.

Catherine experienced many visions and received her stigmata in the Cappella delle Volte, at the west end of the church. Here, there is a portrait of her by Andrea Vanni, dated around 1380.

Google Map

q
Fortezza Medicea

⌂ Piazza Caduti delle Forze Armate # Fortezza: daily; theatre: Nov–Apr, performances only

This huge red-brick fortress was built for Cosimo I by Baldassarre Lanci in 1560, following Siena’s defeat by the Florentines in the 1554–5 war. The fortress now houses an open-air theatre, and the entrance bastions offer views of the countryside.

EAT

Taverna San Giuseppe

Exceptional food and service, plus an Etruscan wine cellar carved from the rock.

⌂ **Via Dupré 132** ¢ **Sun** Σ tavernasangiuseppe.it

¡¡¡

Grotta Santa Caterina da Bagoga

Charming trattoria run by an ex-Palio jockey.

⌂ **Via della Galluzza 26** ¢ **Mon** Σ ristorantebagoga.it

¡¡¡

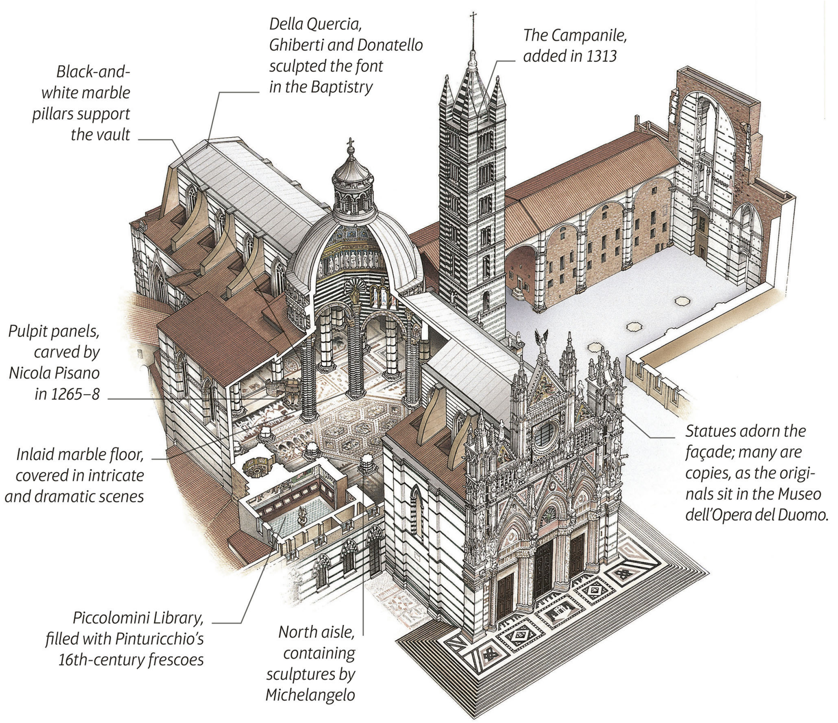
Google Map

w "

Siena Duomo

⌂ Piazza del Duomo @ Pollicino # Hours vary, check website Σ operaduomo.siena.it

Siena's hulking Duomo is a treasure house of late Gothic sculpture, early Renaissance painting and Baroque design. The early architects dressed the cathedral in striking Romanesque stripes, but the form is firmly Gothic. The interior is just as awe-inspiring, from Nicola Pisano's splendid pulpit to the heavily frescoed Piccolomini Library, the work of Pinturicchio and his assistants.



▲ Exterior of Siena Duomo, seen from the Piazza del Duomo

▲ Campanile and dome of Siena Duomo at sunrise, with the rooftops of Siena in the background

Siena's Duomo (1136–1382) is one of the most spectacular in Italy, and one of the few to have been built south of the Alps in full Gothic style. The mosaic floor is particularly special, with Vasari decreeing it the "largest and most magnificent floor ever made". Many ordinary citizens helped to cart the black-and-white stone used in the church's construction from quarries on the outskirts of the city. In 1339, the Sienese decided to build a new nave to the south, aiming to make their cathedral the biggest in Christendom. This plan came to nothing when plague killed off much of the population soon afterwards. The uncompleted nave now contains a

museum of sculpture.

Did You Know?

The Duomo's stripes represent Siena's founders, said to have arrived on one black horse, one white.

Google Map

2

AREZZO

V @ Piazza della Repubblica n Via Giorgio Vasari 13; discoverarezzo.com

One of the wealthiest cities in Tuscany, Arezzo produces beautiful gold jewellery for shops all over Europe, and is famed for Piero della Francesca's magnificent frescoes and its bustling antiques market.

▲ The bustling antiques market in Piazza Grande

n Double-tap image to read the labels

Google Map

1 "

Casa del Vasari

⌂ Via XX Settembre 55 § 0575 40 90 40 # 9am–7:30pm Mon & Wed–Fri, 2:15–7:30pm Sat, 9am–1:30pm Sun

Giorgio Vasari (1512–74) built this house for himself in 1541. He decorated the ceilings and walls with many portraits of fellow artists, friends and mentors. A prolific painter and architect, Vasari is most famous for his book, *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters,*

Sculptors and Architects (1550). Despite the book's often cavalier attitude to the truth, Vasari's account of Renaissance artists has led to him being described as the first art historian.

 Google Map

2 "

Museo Statale d'Arte Medioevale e Moderna

⌂ Via di San Lorentino 8 § 0575 40 90 50 # Tue–Sat

Housed in the graceful 15th-century Palazzo Bruni, the museum's courtyard contains a fine selection of sculptures dating from the 10th to the 17th century. The collection includes several terracottas by Andrea della Robbia and a superb display of beautiful majolica pottery.

 Google Map

3

Duomo

⌂ Piazza del Duomo # Daily

Begun in 1278, the Duomo was completed in 1510; its façade dates to 1914. A huge building, it features a Gothic interior and beautiful 16th century stained glass windows. To the left of the High Altar is the tomb of Guido Tarlati, ruler of Arezzo from 1312 to 1327.

▲ Sculpture of Stigmata of San Francesco, Museo Statale d'Arte Medioevale e Moderna

Did You Know?

The Chimera fountain near the station is a copy of an Etruscan bronze cast here in 380 BCE.

Google Map

4 "

Museo Diocesano di Arte Sacra (Mudas)

⌂ Piazzetta del Duomo 1 § 0577 28 63 00 # Apr–Oct: 10am–6pm daily; Nov–Mar: 10am–1:30pm & 2–5pm Fri–Sun

Among the artifacts removed from the Duomo are three wooden crucifixes, dating from the 12th and the 13th century. The oldest of these was painted by Margaritone di Arezzo in 1264. Also of interest are Bernardo Rossellino's terracotta bas-relief of *The Annunciation* (1434), and works by Vasari and Spinello Aretino.

Google Map

5

Piazza Grande

This lively square is famous for its antiques market. On the west side, the façade of the Palazzo della Fraternità dei Laici is decorated with a relief of the Virgin (1434) by Bernardo Rossellino. The lower half of the building dates from 1377, while the belfry and clock tower date from 1552. The north side of the square features a handsome arcade designed by Vasari in 1573.

Google Map

6 "

Anfiteatro Romano e Museo Archeologico

⌂ Via Margaritone 10 # Hours vary, check website Σ polomusealetoscana.beniculturali.it

To the south of the city centre stands a ruined Roman amphitheatre and the Museo Archeologico. Famous for its extensive collection of Roman Aretine ware, including a piece attributed to the Attic potter Euphronios, the museum has a fascinating display showing how this high-quality, red-glazed pottery was produced and exported throughout the Roman Empire during the 1st century BCE.

Google Map

7

Pieve di Santa Maria

⌂ Corso Italia 7 # Daily

Arezzo's main shopping street, Corso Italia, leads uphill to the Pieve di Santa Maria, which has an ornate Romanesque façade. The splendid campanile, the "tower of a hundred holes" was named for the many arches running through it.

Google Map

8

Fortezza Medicea e Parco il Prato

⌂ Parco il Prato # Summer: 7am–8pm; winter: 7:30am–6:30pm

This imposing 16th-century fortress was built for Cosimo I by Antonio da Sangallo. Partially demolished in the 18th century, only the ramparts still remain intact; these offer great views across the Arno valley. The site makes a wonderful and scenic spot for a

picnic.

Google Map

9 "

SAN FRANCESCO

⌂ Piazza San Francesco § 0575 35 27 27 # 9am–7pm Mon–Fri, 9am–6pm Sat, 1–6pm Sun (to 5pm in winter) ¢ Wed, 1 Jan, 25 Dec

The 13th-century church of San Francesco contains Piero della Francesca's Legend of the True Cross (1452–66), one of Italy's greatest fresco cycles. The frescoes, visible once more after a long restoration, show how the Cross was found near Jerusalem by the Empress Helena. Her son, the Emperor Constantine, then adopted it as his battle emblem. Visitors have a limited time in the chapel and advance booking is mandatory.

▲ Constantine adopts the Cross as his battle emblem.

▲ The magnificent interior of San Francesco, with the 13th-century crucifix that forms the focal point of the fresco cycle

Della Francesca presents the story of the True Cross in dramatic detail. The narrative begins on the right-hand wall with a scene showing a sprig from the Tree of Knowledge being planted over Adam's grave. The Queen of Sheba then visits Solomon and foresees that a bridge made from the Tree will be used to crucify the world's greatest king. Solomon, assuming he is that king, orders the bridge to be buried. We then see the Annunciation and Christ on the Cross at the centre of the fresco cycle. Centuries later, Constantine has a vision of the Cross and hears a voice saying "in this sign you shall conquer". Constantine goes on to defeat his rival Maxentius, while

Judas Kyriakos is tortured into revealing the location of the True Cross. Three crosses are then dug up and Constantine's mother Helena recognizes the True Cross. The Persian king Chosroes is defeated after stealing the True Cross, and it is finally returned to Jerusalem.

Google Map

3

CORTONA

V Camucia, 5 km (3 miles) SE @ Piazza Garibaldi n Piazza Signorelli 9; 0575 63 72 74

Cortona is one of the oldest cities in Tuscany. It was founded by the Etruscans, whose work can still be seen in the foundations of the city's massive walls. Cortona was a major seat of power during the medieval period, but declined following its defeat by Naples in 1409, after which it was sold to Florence and lost its autonomy.

▲ Pretty pastel houses in Cortona, with the stunning countryside stretching out behind

n Double-tap image to read the labels

Google Map

1 "

Museo Diocesano

⌂ Piazza del Duomo 1 # Hours vary, check website Σ cortonatuseibellezza.it

Housed in the 16th-century church of Gesù, the museum contains several masterpieces. Chief among these are Fra Angelico's *Annunciation* (1428–30), a *Crucifixion* by Pietro Lorenzetti (c 1280–1348) and a *Deposition* by Luca Signorelli (1441–1523). There is also a Roman sarcophagus featuring Lapiths and Centaurs, which was much admired by Donatello and Brunelleschi.

Insider Tip

Eremo le Celle

Walk 3 km (2 miles) from Cortona to see St Francis' cell at the woodland

hermitage he is thought to have founded in 1211. The stone monastery fits in perfectly with the natural surroundings.

Google Map

2
Duomo

Piazza del Duomo # Daily

The present Duomo was designed by Giuliano da Sangallo in the 16th century. Remains of an earlier Romanesque building were incorporated into the west façade. The attractive doorway (1550) was designed by Cristofanello.

Google Map

3 "
Museo dell'Accademia Etrusca

Piazza Signorelli 9 # 10am–7pm daily (winter: to 5pm Tue–Sun) Σ cortonamaec.org

This museum contains some major Etruscan artifacts, including a 4th-century BCE bronze chandelier. There are also a number of Egyptian objects. On the west wall of the main hall is a beautiful fresco of Polymnia, the muse of song. It was once believed to date from the 1st or 2nd century, but it is now known to be a skilful 18th-century fake.

Google Map

4
Santa Margherita

Piazzale Santa Margherita

The Via Crucis, a long uphill lane with gardens on either side leading to this 19th-century church, was laid out as a war memorial in 1947. It is decorated with Futurist mosaics depicting episodes of Christ's Passion by Gino Severini (1883–1966). The church, rebuilt in the Romanesque-Gothic style from 1856 to 1897, has excellent views over the surrounding countryside. A single rose window remains from the original church. A number of Turkish battle standards captured in the 18th century lie near the altar.

▲ The Romanesque-Gothic interior of Santa Margherita church

Google Map

5
Santa Maria delle Grazie al Calcinaio

⌂ Calcinaio # Daily

A 15-minute stroll from the town centre, this Renaissance church (1485) is one of the few surviving works by Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439–1502). The building is opened on request – ask at the caretaker's house, beyond a garden to the right of the main entrance.

Google Map

6
Parco Archeologico

⌂ Località Sodo di Cortona # Apr–Oct: 10am–7pm daily; Nov–Mar:

10am–5pm Tue–Sun Σ cortonamaec.org

This archaeological area just outside Cortona park houses a series of Etruscan tombs, including the Tumulo II del Sodo and the Tanella di Pitagora (once thought to be Pythagoras' tomb). E-bikes are available free of charge.

Google Map

7
Fortezza del Girifalco

⌂ Via Santa Margherita # Hours vary, check website Σ fortezzadelgirifalco.it

This Medicean fortress, built in its current form in 1561 for Cosimo I, stands at the highest point of Cortona; the view from the ramparts stretches as far as Lake Trasimeno over the regional border in Umbria.

Google Map

8
San Niccolò

⌂ Via San Niccolò

A secluded church dating from the 15th century, with a charming courtyard garden. The interior has a pair of extraordinary paintings by Luca Signorelli – *Deposition and Madonna and Child with Saints* – that sit on either side of the altarpiece. The ornamental ceiling was added in 1768.

Experience More

Google Map

4

Lucignano

@ n Via Giacomo Matteotti 38; 0575 83 77 23

The attractive medieval town of Lucignano has many well-preserved 14th-century houses and enjoys sweeping views over the Valdichiana, a fertile area of reclaimed marshland famous for the statuesque white Chianina cattle. The town's street plan is unusual, consisting of a series of four concentric rings encircling the hill upon which the town sits, sheltered by its ancient walls. There are four small piazzas at the town's centre.

In one, the Collegiata church is fronted by attractive steps, semicircular to reflect the street plan. Completed by Orazio Porta in 1594, it contains some fine gilded wooden angels added in 1706.

The 14th-century Palazzo Comunale houses the **Museo Comunale**. Its highlight is a massive gold reliquary, 2.5 m (8 ft) high, to which numerous artists contributed over the period 1350–1471. Because of its shape, it is known as the Tree of Lucignano. Also of note are two 14th-century paintings by Luca Signorelli: a lunette showing St Francis of Assisi miraculously receiving the stigmata, and a *Madonna and Child*. There are several fine 13th- to 15th-century Siena school paintings and a small painting of the Madonna by Lippo Vanni (1341–75). The vaulted ceiling of the Sala del Tribunale, has frescoes of famous biblical figures and characters from Classical mythology, painted from 1438–65 by various Siena school artists.

In the countryside near Lucignano, the 15th-century Santuario della Madonna delle Querce is attributed to Vasari.

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Museo Comunale

⌂ Piazza del Tribunale 22 § 0575 83 80 01 # Hours vary, call ahead

Google Map

5

Asciano

V @ n Via Amos Cassioli 2; prolocoasciano.it

▲ Hiking to Asciano through the clay hills of the Crete Senesi

The road from Siena to Asciano passes through the strange, undulating Crete landscape, almost bare of vegetation. Asciano itself is medieval, and retains much of its fortified wall. The main street, Corso Matteotti, is lined with smart shops and palazzi. At the top of the street, in Piazza della Basilica, there is a large fountain from 1472. Facing it is the late 13th-century Romanesque Basilica di Sant'Agata.

The **Museo Civico Archeologico e d'Arte Sacra** in the Palazzo Corboli contains late Siena school masterpieces: Duccio's *Madonna and Child* and Ambrogio Lorenzetti's unusual *St Michael the Archangel*. Also on display are local Etruscan finds from the tombs built between the 7th and 4th centuries BCE at the Necropoli di Poggio Pinci, 5 km (3 miles) east of Asciano.

About 10 km (6 miles) south of Asciano is **Monte Oliveti Maggiore**. The approach to this abbey is through thick cypresses, with stunning views of eroded cliffs and sheer drops to the valley floor. It was founded in 1313 by the Olivetan order, who were dedicated to restoring the simplicity of Benedictine monastic rule.

The 15th-century Baroque rose-pink abbey church has outstanding choir stalls of inlaid wood. Alongside is the Great Cloister, its walls covered by a cycle of frescoes that depict scenes from the life of St Benedict. Begun in 1495 by Luca Signorelli, a pupil of Piero della Francesca, it was finished by Sodoma in 1508 and is considered a masterpiece for the way it combines architectural and naturalistic detail.

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Museo Civico Archeologico e d'Arte Sacra

⌂ Corso Matteotti 122 § 0577 71 44 50 # Apr–Oct: Wed–Sun; Nov–March: Sat, Sun & hols

Monte Oliveti Maggiore

§ 0577 70 72 58 # 9:30am–12:40pm & 2:30–6pm Fri–Sun

White Truffles

One of Italy's most prestigious foodstuffs, the white truffle of Crete Senesi grows around the roots of trees such as oaks, poplars and willows. An annual festival to celebrate the aromatic tuber is held each November in San Giovanni d'Asso, where there is also a dedicated museum, the Museo del Tartufo, in the 13th-century castle cellars. Search out your own truffles with Alessandro of Siena Tartufi on a fun truffle hunting experience with dogs in the woods near Siena, or visit his cubbyhole shop just off Siena's Piazza del Campo *(sienatartufi.com)*.

Google Map

6

San Galgano

(località Chiusdino) @ From Siena

▲ The soaring ruins of San Galgano abbey, unusual in Tuscany in its Gothic style

The ruined Cistercian abbey is very remote but well worth the journey for the beauty of its woodland surroundings and the majesty of the roofless building. Begun in 1218, the abbey is Gothic in style, reflecting the French origins of the Cistercian monks who designed and built it. The monks avoided contact with civilization and divided their lives between prayer and labour, clearing the hills of vegetation to graze their sheep. Despite the Cistercian emphasis on poverty, the monks became wealthy from the sale of wool; by the middle of the 14th century, the abbey was corruptly administered and gradually fell into decline.

The abbey was eventually dissolved in 1652. Empty for many years, the cloister and other monastic buildings are now being restored for Olivetan nuns. A small shop sells locally produced herbs, wines, olive oils and toiletries.

On a hill above the abbey is the beehive-shaped chapel of Montesiepi, built on the site of St Galgano's hermitage a few years after his death in 1181. St Galgano's sword stands embedded in a stone just inside the door of the circular oratory. The 14th-century stone walls of the side chapel are covered with frescoes showing scenes from Galgano's life by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1344).

Did You Know?

St Galgano was a soldier who renounced his warrior ways after plunging his sword into a stone.

Google Map

7
Montalcino

@ n Piazza del Popolo; montalcino.net

▲ The walkway along the ramparts of Montalcino’s Fortezza, offering great views

Montalcino’s famous Brunello is one of Italy’s greatest wines, appreciated the world over. It is made from Sangiovese grapes from the vineyards that surround the appealing hilltop town and there are numerous opportunities to try it here. Dominating from the highest point of town is the Fortezza, built in 1361; there are spectacular views from the impressive ramparts that were added by Cosimo I in the 16th century.

The **Abbazia di Sant'Antimo** lies about 10 km (6 miles) southeast of Montalcino. Enchantingly beautiful in its setting of olive-clad hills, it is in French Romanesque style, built in creamy travertine stone and alabaster. There is a luminous quality to the stonework of the interior that visibly changes according to the time of day and season. Recordings of plainsong echoing around the walls add to the otherworldly atmosphere. The current community of Augustinian monks sing Gregorian chants at mass, every day except Saturday. They also brew beer and make honey and herbal remedies, on sale in their pharmacy.

Did You Know?

The wine growing region of Montalcino

supports over 200 producers.

Abbazia di Sant’Antimo

⌂ Castelnuovo dell’ Abate # Daily Σ antimo.it

Google Map

8

Bagno Vignoni

@ From Siena n 0577 89 9 7 28

▲ The hot springs at Bagno Vignoni

This is a tiny medieval spa village consisting of a handful of houses built around a huge piazza containing an arcaded, stone-lined pool. Constructed by the Medici, the pool is full of hot sulphurous water that bubbles up to the surface from the volcanic rocks deep underground. The pool is no longer open for bathing, but is still well worth a visit to admire the architecture. Sulphur pools in the grounds of the Posta Marcucci hotel and at several other public spas are open for swimming.

Google Map

9

Chiusi

V @ n Via Porsenna 79; prolocochiusi.it

Chiusi was one of the most powerful cities in the Etruscan league, reaching the height of its influence in the 7th and 6th centuries BCE. There are many Etruscan tombs in the surrounding countryside. The Museo Archeologico is packed with cremation urns, vases decorated with black figures and Bucchero ware, burnished to resemble bronze.

Chiusi's Romanesque Duomo is built from recycled Roman pillars and capitals. The Museo della Cattedrale has an interesting display of Roman, Lombardic and medieval sculpture. Visits can be arranged here to underground galleries beneath the city, dug by the Etruscans and used as Christian catacombs from the 3rd to the 5th century. Another fascinating tour of subterranean Chiusi's ancient Etruscan tunnels is offered by the **Museo Civico La Città Sotteranea**. The tour ends at an underground lake 30m (100 ft) below ground level.

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Museo Civico La Città Sotteranea

⌂ Via II Ciminia 2 Σ museisenesi.org

Great View

The Val d'Orcia Landscape

All those iconic, quintessentially Tuscan views of gently rolling hills and cypresses featured on postcards and calendars are almost all to be found in the Val d'Orcia. The Madonna di Vitaleta chapel is one favourite among photographers.

Google Map

10

San Quirico d'Orcia

@ n Via Dante Alighieri 33; 0577 89 97 28

Standing just inside the city walls, San Quirico d'Orcia's pride is the **Collegiata** church, featuring three ornately carved Romanesque portals built onto an 8th-century structure. Begun in 1080, the capitals and lintels of the portals are carved with details of dragons, mermaids and other mythical beasts.

The church commemorates the 3rd-century martyr St Quiricus, who was killed at the age of five by the Romans for the simple act of declaring himself a Christian. Quiricus is depicted in the elaborate altar piece by Sano di Pietro.

Next to the church is the 17th-century Palazzo Chigi, whose frescoed interior has been restored. The Horti Leonini nearby is a 16th-century garden of box hedges. Once a refuge for pilgrims, it is now used as a public sculpture garden during the summer.

▲ The Collegiata church in San Quirico d'Orcia, dedicated to a five-year-old martyr

Collegiata

⌂ Piazza Chigi 1 § 0577 89 72 36 # Daily

TOP 3

MONTALCINO WINERIES

Castello di Banfi

Σ castellobanfi.com

Based around a hilltop castle, this winery runs tours and tastings.

Fattoria dei Barbi

Σ fattoriadeibarbi.it

Cellar tours, a wine museum and a tavern draw the crowds here.

Podere Le Ripi

Σ podereleripi.it

Biodynamic winery with tastings and tours.

Google Map

11

Montepulciano

@ n Piazza Don Minzoni 1; prolocomontepulciano.it

Montepulciano is built along a narrow limestone ridge and, at 605 m (1,950 ft) above sea level, is one of the highest of Tuscany's hilltop towns. Within the walls and fortifications designed by Antonio da Sangallo the Elder in 1511 for Cosimo I, the town centre is rich with Renaissance palazzi and churches.

A long, winding street called Il Corso climbs up into the main square. Among the fine palazzi on Il Corso, Palazzo Bucelli (1648) is particularly noteworthy for its lower façade studded with ancient Etruscan reliefs and funerary urns collected by the 18th-century owner, Pietro Bucelli. Further along Il Corso is the Piazza Michelozzo and the church of Sant'Agostino, built by Michelozzo in 1427; it has a carved portal featuring the Virgin and Child flanked

by St John and St Augustine.

In the Piazza Grande stands the Duomo, designed between 1592 and 1630 by Ippolito Scalza. The façade is unfinished and plain, but the interior is Classical in proportions. It is the setting for an earlier masterpiece from the Siena school, the *Assumption of the Virgin* triptych by Taddeo di Bartolo (1401). Placed over the High Altar, it is rich in jewel-like colours and heavily embossed with gold leaf. Next to the Duomo is the Gothic **Palazzo Comunale**, the town hall. Michelozzo added the 15th-century tower and façade, turning it into a smaller version of Florence's Palazzo Vecchio. Narrow stairs lead to the top of the tower and amazing views. Nearby is the **Museo Civico**, which has an interesting collection of 17th–18th century paintings and sections dedicated to Della Robbia terracottas and local archaeological finds.

Perched on a platform below the city walls, is the beautiful church of **Madonna di San Biagio**. Built of honey and cream-coloured travertine, it is Sangallo's masterpiece. Begun in 1518, the project occupied him until his death in 1534.

In August, there are two festivals in Montepulciano: the Bruscello takes place on the 14th, 15th and 16th, when scenes from the town's turbulent history are re-enacted. For the Bravio delle Botti, on the last Sunday in August, there is a parade through the streets followed by a barrel race held between the town's eight *contradas* (districts) and a banquet.

▲ The Madonna di San Biagio church, a Renaissance gem by Giuliano da Sangallo

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Palazzo Comunale

⌂ Piazza Grande 1 § 0578 7121 # Apr–Nov: 10am– 6pm daily (tower)

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Museo Civico

⌂ Via Ricci 10 Σ museocivicomontepulciano.it

Madonna di San Biagio

⌂ Via di San Biagio 14 # Hours vary, check website Σ tempiosanbiagio.it

Hidden Gem

The Cellars of Montepulciano

Beneath the foundations of Montepulciano's most important Renaissance buildings lies a labyrinth of ancient cellars, many still used to age the famous

Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, one of Tuscany’s top wines.

Google Map

12
Pienza

@ n Via delle Case Nuove 4; prolocopienza.it

▲ Floral displays and local delicacies on show in the streets of Pienza

The centre of Pienza was completely redesigned in Renaissance times by Pope Pius II. Born here in 1405, when it was called Corsignano, Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini – a leading Humanist scholar and philosopher – was elected pope in 1458. The following year he decided to commission a new centre in Corsignano and rename it Pienza in his own honour. He planned to transform his birthplace into a model Renaissance town, but the grand scheme never progressed beyond the handful of buildings around the Piazza Pio II. The architect Bernardo Rossellino was commissioned to build a Duomo, papal palace and town hall here, which were finished within three years. Subsequently, Rossellino was caught embezzling papal funds, but Pius II forgave him because he was so delighted with his new buildings.

The Duomo, completed by the skillful architect Rossellino in 1459, is now suffering from subsidence at its eastern end. However, the cracks in the walls and floor of the nave do not detract at all from the splendid Classical proportions of this Renaissance church. It is flooded with light from the vast and breathtaking stained-glass windows requested by Pius II; he envisioned a *domus vitrea* (literally

“a house of glass”) that would symbolize the spirit of intellectual enlightenment of the Humanist age.

The **Palazzo Piccolomini** next door to the Duomo was home to Pius II’s descendants until 1968. Rossellino’s design for the building was influenced by Leon Battista Alberti’s Palazzo Rucellai in Florence. The apartments open to the public include Pius II’s bedroom and library, which are full of his belongings. At the rear of the palazzo there is an arcaded courtyard and a triple-tiered loggia. The spectacular view across the garden takes in the wooded slopes of Monte Amiata.

On the outskirts of Pienza, on Via del Fonti, is the 11th-century Romanesque parish church of Pieve di Corsignano, in which Pope Pius II was baptized. It has an unusual round tower and a doorway decorated with flower motifs.

Not far from the town is the isolated 16th-century monastery of Sant’Anna in Camprena, with wonderful frescoes painted by Sodoma. It offers accommodation under the *agriturismo* scheme.

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Palazzo Piccolomini

⌂ Piazza Pio II § 0577 28 63 00 # 10am–4:30pm daily ¢ Last 2 wks in Nov, Jan–mid-Feb

Pienza cheese

Pienza is famous for its delicious sheep's cheeses. They gain their complexity, say producers proudly, from the wild herbs in the sheep's diet. Many producers are organic, some even treating their flocks with homeopathic remedies. Try some of the variously aged cheeses and other produce at the Taverna del Pecorino *(Via Condotti 1)*.

Northwest Tuscany

▲ Market stalls lining Piazza Anfiteatreo in central Lucca

Introduction

Area Map

Must Sees

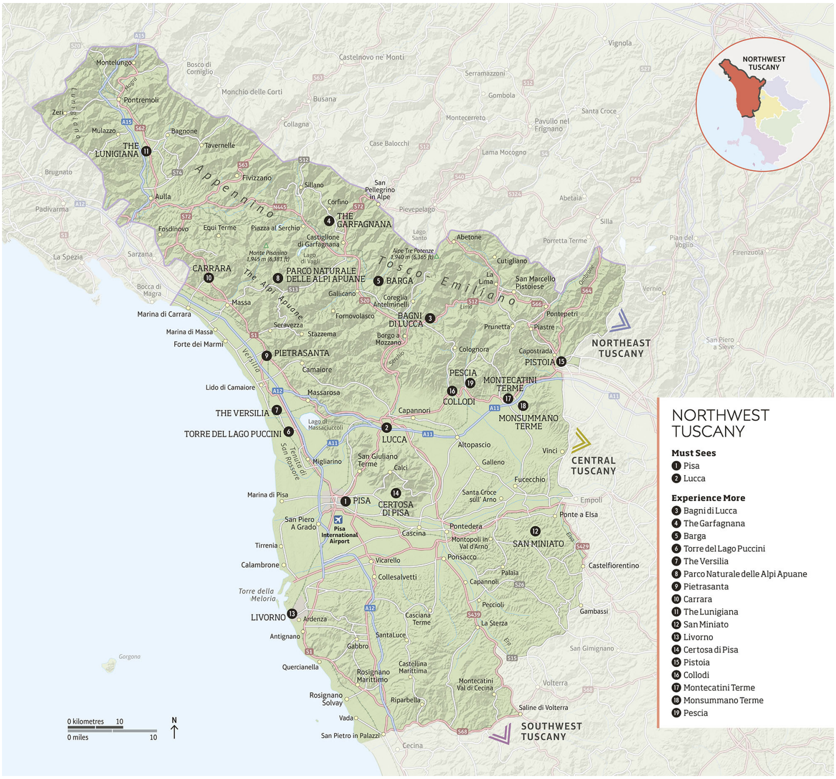
Experience More

The sea has played a key role in the fortunes of this largely coastal area since ancient times, as evidenced by the discovery of 30 Roman vessels near Pisa in 1998. Despite having to rely on an inland port, Pisa became one of Italy's most influential maritime republics, dominating the Western Mediterranean from the 11th century. This lasted until 1406 when the Florentine Medici took over and reduced Pisa's power, making Livorno the region's principal harbour.

Further up the coast, the marble mines at Carrara, first established in Roman times, played an important role in supplying the sculptors of the Renaissance. Michelangelo even spent two years (1518–20) trying to build a road from Serravazza to the coast in order to transport stone for the façade of San Lorenzo in Florence, before eventually abandoning the project. In the early 19th century some of Italy's first seaside resorts were established at Versilia, and Forte dei Marmi continues to be among the most exclusive.

Area Map

NorthWest Tuscany



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Must Sees

1 Pisa

2 Lucca

Experience More

3 Bagni di Lucca

4 The Garfagnana

5 Barga

6 Torre del Lago Puccini

7 The Versilia

8 Parco Naturale delle Alpi Apuane

9 Pietrasanta

10 Carrara

11 The Lunigiana

12 San Miniato

13 Livorno

14 Certosa di Pisa

15 Pistoia

16 Collodi

17 Montecatini Terme

18 Monsummano Terme

19 Pescia

Google Map

1

PISA

k Galileo Galilei V @ Pisa Centrale, Viale Gramsci n Piazza Duomo; turismo.pisa.it

Now best known for its eponymous leaning tower and elite university, Pisa was a dominant force in the Western Mediterranean from the 11th to the 13th century due to its powerful navy. Trading links with Spain and North Africa led to a cultural revolution, reflected in the splendid buildings of the era: the Duomo, Baptistry and Campanile. Pisa's decline as a maritime power was assured when the Arno began to silt up, and salt marsh now divides the city from the sea.

▲ The historic part of Pisa, with a small bridge across the Arno

n Double-tap image to read the labels

Google Map

1 " '
Museo Nazionale di San Matteo

⌂ Lungarno Mediceo, Piazza San Matteo 1 § 050 54 18 65 # 9am, 11:30am, 3:30pm & 5:30pm Tue–Sat; 9am & 11:30am Sun & hols

The medieval convent of San Matteo is located alongside the River Arno. Many exhibits in the museum inside are poorly labelled and the rooms leading off the cloister are unnumbered. Nevertheless, the museum presents a unique opportunity to examine the complete sweep of Pisan and Florentine art from the 12th to the 17th century. Most of the earliest works portray the Virgin and Child; these include Simone Martini's fine polyptych (1321) and a 14th-century statue, the *Madonna del Latte*, attributed to Nino Pisano, another member of the talented family of sculptors. The half-length

statue, in gilded marble, shows Christ feeding at his mother's breast. A number of early Renaissance pieces are of interest, particularly Masaccio's *St Paul* (1426), Gentile da Fabriano's radiant 15th-century *Madonna and Child*, and Donatello's reliquary bust of San Rossore (1424–7).

Google Map

2
Piazza dei Cavalieri

The Piazza dei Cavalieri stands at the heart of Pisa's student quarter. The huge building on the north side of the square, covered in exuberant black-and-white *sgraffito* decoration (designs scratched into wet plaster), is the Palazzo dei Cavalieri, housing one of Italy's most prestigious university colleges: the Scuola Normale Superiore. The site was originally occupied by Pisa's medieval town hall, but Cosimo I ordered its destruction when the city fell under Florentine rule. The council chamber was spared, however, and is now a lecture hall. The present flamboyant building was designed in 1562 by Vasari as the headquarters of the Cavalieri di San Stefano, an order of knights created by Cosimo in 1561. The knights' church, also designed by Vasari, stands next to the Palazzo dei Cavalieri. On the other side of the palazzo is the Palazzo dell'Orologio, incorporating the medieval town jail. Now a library, in 1288 the building was the scene of a most shameful and gruesome episode when Count Ugolino, mayor of Pisa, was imprisoned here with his sons and grandsons. The keys were thrown in the Arno and the prisoners left to starve.

STAY

Palazzo Cini

A stylish hotel with five spacious rooms designed by architect owner Ivan Cini.

⌂ **Via Manzoni 12** Σ palazzocinilux.com

Relais I Miracoli

Unbeatably located; most rooms have views of Pisa's Leaning Tower just across the piazza.

⌂ **Via Santa Maria 187** Σ relaisimiracoli.it

Royal Victoria

This hotel dates from the 15th century, with antiques and frescoes in each room.

⌂ **Lungarno Pacinotti 12** Σ royalvictoria.it

Google Map

3

Santa Maria della Spina

⌂ Lungarno Gambacorti § 050 55 01 00 # 10am–1pm Mon, 3–7pm Tue–Thu, 10am–1pm & 3–7pm Fri–Sun

The roofline of Santa Maria della Spina bristles with spiky Gothic pinnacles, miniature spires and niches sheltering statues of apostles and saints. The church was built to house an unusual relic: a thorn from the Crown of Thorns forced on to Christ’s head before His crucifixion. Originally called Santa Maria di Pontenovo, the church’s name was changed to Spina, or "thorn", when it acquired this relic in 1333.

GIUGNO PISANO

Throughout June, Pisa celebrates its historical events and traditions in the Giugno Pisano. Alongside countless concerts and exhibitions there are four main celebrations: the Battle, the Regatta, the Luminara and (every four years) the Regatta of the Republics.

Google Map

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Palazzo Blu

⌂ Lungarno Gambacorti 9 # 10am–7pm Mon–Fri (to 8pm Sat & Sun) Σ palazzoblu.it

The striking sky-blue colour of this palazzo, which overlooks the River Arno, dates from the late 18th century, a time when numerous visitors from St Petersburg stayed here. Now a gallery, it regularly hosts world-class temporary exhibitions, while the collection focuses on Pisan art from the 14th to 20th centuries. The beautifully decorated rooms include period furnishings.

Google Map

5

Tuttomondo Mural

⌂ Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II 17

▲ The vibrant *Tuttomondo* mural (1989) by American artist Keith Haring

The last of Keith Haring's colourful murals decorates the back wall of the 14th-century church of Sant'Antonio Abate. The American artist took four days to complete the mural, which features 30 figures in various positions representing peace in the world. The Keith Art Shop Café opposite is an ideal spot to admire the work.

Did You Know?

Tuttomondo was Keith Haring's last public work; he died just over six months after its completion.

Google Map

6

Tenuta San Rossore

⌂ Località Cascine Vecchie @ 6 from Pisa Σ parcosanrossore.org

The San Rossore estate, just outside Pisa, is at the heart of a vast area of parkland that stretches along the coast from Viareggio to Livorno. Hire a bicycle at the Cascine Vecchie visitor centre, join a horse trek or take a tour by a road-train. There are scenic picnic

spots as well as bars and restaurants on the estate.

Google Map

7
Marina di Pisa

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▲ A remote fishing hut in Marina di Pisa

On the coast about 12 km (7 miles) west of Pisa, Marina is a former salt marsh. Reclaimed in the 17th century, it is now a modest seaside resort with beach facilities. While the beaches here vary between sand and pebbles, the nearby resorts of Tirrenia (where there is a good nine-hole golf course) and Calambrone have sandy beaches. There is a small marina by the river mouth adjacent to the town, as well as some evocative traditional fishing huts with suspended nets. The last section of river between Pisa and the sea has several good seafood restaurants.

Google Map

8

San Piero a Grado

⌂ Via Vecchia di Marina 5 § 050 96 00 65 # 8am–6pm daily

San Piero is a handsome 11th-century church built during the reign of Pope John XVIII (1004–9) on the spot where St Peter is believed to have first set foot on Italian soil in 42 CE.

According to the Book of Acts (New Testament), he arrived at a set of landing steps by the Arno. The foundations of Roman port buildings have been discovered beneath the present church, which stands where the Arno once flowed into the sea, though silt deposits mean it is now some 6 km (4 miles) from the shore.

Unusually, the church lacks a façade; instead it has semi-circular apses at both the east and west ends. The exterior is decorated with Moorish-style ceramic plates set into the masonry around the eaves – a feature that it shares with the Duomo in San Miniato.

MUSEO PIAGGIO

Visitors staying in Pisa may want to check out this great museum in Piaggio, just 15 minutes away by train. Vespa scooters have been made in Piaggio since the 1940s, and this collection includes custom and race versions of the iconic motorbikes (*museopiaggio.it*).

eat

Ristorante Poldino

Located in the heart of San Rossore; the tasty dishes here are made largely with produce from the estate.

⌂ **Località Cascine Vecchie 13, Rossore** Σ poldino.com

¡¡¡

Alle Bandierine

Open for dinner only, this family-run restaurant serves delicious spaghetti dishes and excellent seafood.

⌂ **Via Mercanti 4** Σ ristoranteallebandierine.it

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Google Map

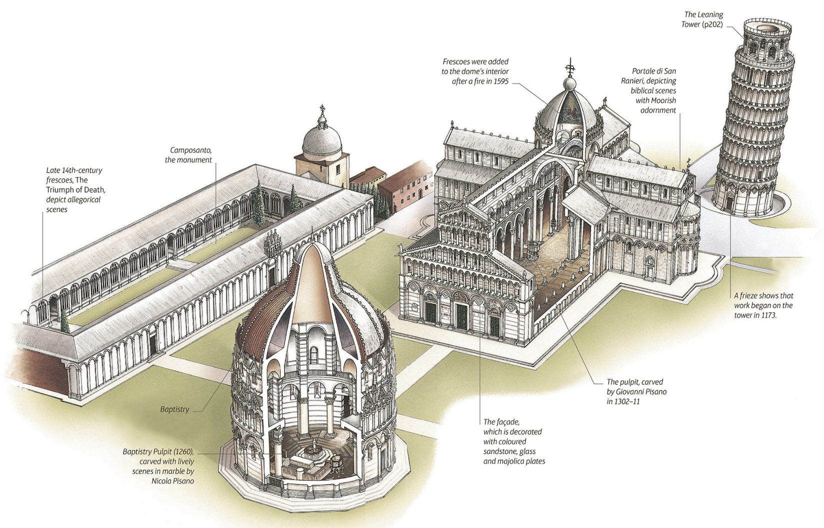
9 "

piazza del duomo

⌂ Piazza del Duomo @ 4, 21 # Baptistry, Camposanto, museums and Duomo: 9am–8pm daily; Tower: 9am–10pm daily Σ opapisa.it

Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987, this gorgeous square studded with masterpieces of Romanesque architecture was medieval Italy's grandest building project and remains an Italian icon.

▲ The Baptistry is the largest in Italy and is topped by a Gothic dome.



▲ Spectacular buildings laid out across the Piazza del Duomo

Pisa's world-famous Leaning Tower is just one of the splendid religious buildings that rise from the emerald-green lawns of the "Square of Miracles". Lying to the northwest of the city centre, the tower is partnered by the Duomo, begun in 1063, the Baptistry of 1152–1284 and the Camposanto cemetery, begun in 1278. The Leaning Tower itself was not completed until 1350, when its seven bells were hung. All the buildings feature definite Moorish elements – such as inlaid marble in geometric patterns (arabesques) – with delicate Romanesque colonnading and spiky Gothic niches and pinnacles.

Did You Know?

The cathedral's south transept door is a replica; the original is now in the Museo dell'Opera.

Museo dell'Opera del Duomo

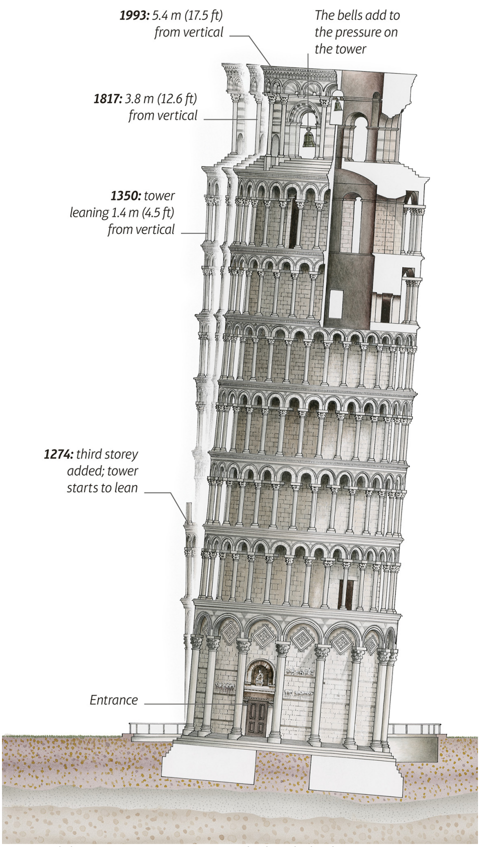
Housed in the former Chapter House of the cathedral, the museum was opened in 1986. Exhibits, such as the intricately inlaid marble panels, reveal the twin influences of Rome and Islam on Pisan architects in the 12th and 13th centuries. Other pieces include 13th-century statues and sculptures by

Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, 15th–18th-century paintings, a fine Roman and Etruscan archaeological collection, and 12th-century ecclesiastical treasures. The museum cloister offers wonderful views of the Leaning Tower.

The Leaning Tower of Pisa

All the buildings of the Piazza del Duomo lean because of their shallow foundations and the sandy silt subsoil, but none tilts so famously as the Torre Pendente: the Leaning Tower. Begun in 1173, the tower began to tip sideways before the third storey was finished. Despite this, construction continued until its completion in 1350. More than ten years of engineering interventions succeeded in stabilizing the tower in 2008. It should remain secure for at least 200 years.

▲ The unmistakable slant of the Leaning Tower of Pisa



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Did You Know?

The tower's interrupted construction gave the soil time to settle – which prevented it from toppling.

Google Map

2

Lucca

V Piazza Ricasoli @ Piazzale Verdi n Piazzale Verdi; turismo.lucca.it

Lucca is enclosed by massive red-brick walls, which help give the city its special character by shutting out traffic and the modern world. Built between 1504 and 1645, they are among the best-preserved Renaissance defences in Europe. Within these walls, Lucca is a peaceful city of narrow lanes, with its original ancient Roman street plan preserved intact. Unlike several of Tuscany's hilltop cities, Lucca is flat; many locals use bicycles, which lends the city added charm.

▲ Market stalls lining Piazza Anfiteatreo in central Lucca

n Double-tap image to read the labels

Google Map

1 " '
Museo Nazionale di Villa Guinigi

⌂ Via della Quarquonia # 9am–7:30pm Tue & Thu, 1st & 3rd Sun of month; noon–7:30pm Wed & Fri–Sat ¢ 1 Jan, 25 Dec Σ luccamuseinazionali.it

This Renaissance villa was built for Paolo Guinigi, who ruled Lucca from 1400 until 1430. The ground floor holds sculpture from Lucca and its surrounds, including fine Romanesque reliefs from the city’s churches. The gallery on the floor above displays paintings and choir stalls from Lucca’s cathedral, inlaid with exquisite marquetry views of the city in 1529.

Google Map

2 " =
Casa Natale di Puccini

⌂ Corte San Lorenzo 9 (Via di Poggio) # Hours vary, check website Σ puccinimuseum.org

The 15th-century house in which Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) was born contains many interesting artifacts, including portraits of

the great composer, costume designs for his operas and the piano he used when composing his last opera, *Turandot*. Puccini died before he was able to finish this, and the composition was completed by Franco Alfano and first performed two years later at La Scala in Milan.

Google Map

3
Torre Guinigi

⌂ Via Sant'Andrea 45 # Hours vary, check website Σ comune.lucca.it

Dating from the 1300s, this 44-m- (144-ft-) high tower is one of the many structures built by the Guinigi family. The holm oaks growing at the top of the tower make this a popular attraction.

▲ The tree-topped Torre Guinigi, built in the 14th century

Google Map

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Via Fillungo

Lucca’s principal shopping street winds its way through the heart of the city towards the Anfiteatro Romano. The upper end, towards San Frediano church, has several shops with Art Nouveau ironwork. Halfway down the street, you will find the 13th-century San Cristoforo, which holds exhibitions of work by local artists.

Insider tip

Santa Maria Forisportam

Located beyond the Roman walls of Lucca –*Forisportam* means “outside the gate” – this 12th-century church (Santa Maria Forisportam) has two paintings by Guercino.

Google Map

5 "

Palazzo Pfanner

⌂ Via degli Asili 33 # Apr–Nov: 10am–6pm daily; Dec–Mar: by appt Σ palazzopfanner.it

▲ Marble statues in the formal gardens of Palazzo Pfanner

The imposing Palazzo Pfanner, built in 1667, has a delightful formal garden to the rear, which can also be viewed from the

ramparts. Originally built by the Moriconi family, it was rented and eventually bought outright by Felix Pfanner, an Austrian brewer credited with introducing beer to Lucca. The gardens were laid out in the 18th century, and feature a central avenue lined with Baroque statues of ancient Roman gods and goddesses, which alternate with aromatic lemon trees.

Did You Know?

Scenes from *Portrait of a Lady*, starring John Malkovich and Nicole Kidman, were filmed at Palazzo Pfanner.

Google Map

6 "

Giardino Botanico

⌂ Via del Giardino Botanico 14 # Hours vary, check website Σ ortobotanicodilucca.it

Lucca's delightful botanical garden is tucked right into the city walls and was laid out in 1820 – the result of a bequeathal by Marie Louise de Bourbon, Duchess of Lucca. It spans over 2 hectares (5 acres), and has a wide range of Tuscan and international plants.

Hidden Gem

Montecarlo

This lovely medieval walled village sits midway between Lucca and Montecatini Terme. Here you will find stunning panoramic views, especially from the 14th-century castle, and superb local olive oil and wines.

Google Map

7

San Michele in Foro

⌂ Piazza San Michele # Daily

▲ The striking façade of the Romanesque San Michele in Foro

As its name suggests, this church stands on the site of the ancient Roman forum. It has a wonderfully rich Pisan-Romanesque façade that competes in splendour with that of San Martino. John Ruskin, the English artist and art historian whose work did so much to revive interest in Italian art during the 19th century, spent many hours here sketching the rich mixture of twisted marble columns and Cosmati work (inlaid marble). The façade is in its exuberance, and the inlaid marble scenes depict wild beasts and huntsmen on horseback, rather than Christian subjects. Only the huge winged figure of St Michael, standing on the pediment and flanked by two angels, marks this out as a church. The splendour of the façade, built between the 11th and 14th centuries, is matched by the arcading of the bell tower. By contrast, the interior has little of interest except for Filippino Lippi's beautiful *Saints Helena, Jerome, Sebastian and Roch* (1457–1504).

Google Map

8

San Frediano

⌂ Piazza San Frediano # Daily

The striking façade of Lucca's San Frediano church features a colourful 13th-century mosaic, *The Ascension*, by the school of Berlinghieri. Inside, to the right, is a splendid Romanesque font that could easily be mistaken for a fountain, given its size and impressive decoration. The sides are carved with scenes from The Life of Christ and the story of Moses. One dramatic scene shows Moses and his followers dressed in 12th-century armour and looking like Crusaders as they pass through the divided Red Sea with a train of camels.

Amico Aspertini's frescoes (1508–9) in the second chapel in the north aisle tell the story of Lucca's precious relic, the Volto Santo, and give a reasonable impression of what the city looked like in the early 16th century.

Also in the church is a coloured wooden statue of the Virgin, carved by Matteo Civitali, and an altarpiece crafted from a single block of marble by Jacopo della Quercia in the Cappella Trenta. It is carved in the shape of a polyptych, with five Gothic-spired niches.

▲ San Frediano church, topped by a brightly patterned mosaic

Did You Know?

The “incorruptible” body of St Zita, Lucca’s peasant-girl patron saint, is on display in San Frediano.

Google Map

9 " '

Museo Nazionale di Palazzo Mansi

⌂ Via Galli Tassi 43 § 0583 555 70 # 9am–7:30pm Tue & Thu, noon–7:30pm Wed–Sat, 9am–7:30pm 1st & 3rd Sun of month

Lucca’s picture gallery is in the impressive 17th-century Palazzo Mansi, with paintings and furnishings of the same period, typical of the time when Mannerism was being superseded by Baroque and Rococo art. There are also works by Bronzino, Pontormo, Sodoma, Andrea del Sarto, Tintoretto and Salvatore Rosa.

Google Map

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Ramparts

A promenade runs along the top of the city walls, built in 1504–1645, of which a complete circuit measures 4 km (2 miles). Marie Louise de Bourbon made the ramparts into a public park in the early 19th century, with a double avenue of trees. It makes for a delightful walk, with fine views of Lucca. Within the historic city walls, the **Via Francigena Entry Point** takes visitors through an immersive multimedia tour of the ancient Via Francigena pilgrimage route, which runs from Canterbury, England to Rome and passes through Lucca. The intriguing museum complex also features an arms room and an old executioner’s house.

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Via Francigena Entry Point

⌂ Via Bacchettoni 8 # 10:30am–1pm & 3–6pm Sat & Sun Σ viafrancigenaentrypoint.eu

Google Map

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Piazza Napoleone and Piazza del Giglio

Piazza Napoleone was laid out in 1806 when Lucca was under the

imposed rule of Elisa Baciocchi, Napoleon’s sister. The statue in the square is of her successor, Marie Louise de Bourbon. She faces the massive Palazzo Ducale, with its elegant colonnade, built by Ammannati in 1578. Behind her is the Piazza del Giglio, with the Teatro del Giglio (1817) on the south side of the square. The theatre is renowned for its productions of operas by Lucca resident Giacomo Puccini.

THE HISTORY OF LUCCA

The city was founded by the Romans, and Caesar, Pompey and Crassus cemented their First Triumvirate here. According to legend, St Peter’s disciple Paulinus brought Christianity to Lucca. Largely ruled by local lords – except during one 14th-century stint under Pisa – Lucca remained proudly independent of Florence until Napoleon gave the city to his sister Elisa in 1805.

Google Map

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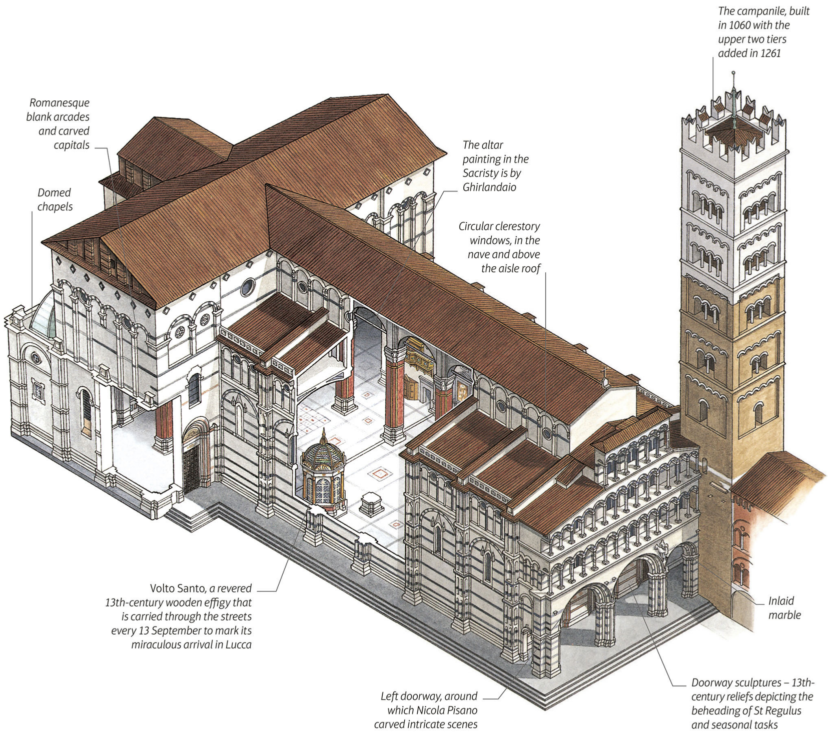
San Martino

⌂ Piazza Antelminelli # Cathedral, bell tower, museum, St Giovanni & Reparata, Baptistry and archaeological area: 10am–6pm daily Σ museocattedralelucca.it

Slotted beside a brick bishop's palace, this Romanesque cathedral rises dramatically from San Martino square. Inside, the Volto Santo remains a major draw for pilgrims.



▲ The ornate San Martino cathedral and adjoining campanile

Lucca's extraordinary cathedral, with its façade abutting incongruously on to the campanile, is dedicated to St Martin. He is the Roman soldier depicted on the façade dividing his cloak with a sword to share it with a needy beggar. This and other scenes from the life of the saint form part of the complex decorations covering the 13th-century façade. There are also reliefs depicting *The Labours of the Months* and intricate panels of inlaid coloured marble showing hunting scenes, peacocks and flowers.

▲ San Martino's somewhat mismatched exterior dates back to 1261, when the cathedral was joined to the pre-existing campanile and the latter's top two towers were added to suit the cathedral's façade.

Did You Know?

Early pilgrims believed that Nicodemus, who witnessed the Crucifixion, carved the *Volto Santo*.

MUSEO DELLA CATTEDRALE

STATUE OF COUNT FAZIO

Housed in the 14th-century former archbishop's palace, this museum displays the treasures of San Martino. These include the 11th-century carved stone head of a king from the original façade and a 14th-century sculpture of Count Fazio, who contributed to the cost of constructing the cathedral. There is also a rare 12th-century Limoges enamel casket, which possibly held a relic of St Thomas à Becket. The *Croce di Pisani* made by Vincenzo di Michele in 1411 is a masterpiece.

Experience More

Google Map

3

Bagni di Lucca

@ n Viale Umberto I, inside the town hall; 0583 80 57 45

▲ Quaint traditional houses precariously lining the old bridge in Bagni di Lucca

Visitors come to Bagni di Lucca for its lime-sulphate springs. In the 19th century, it was one of Europe's most fashionable spa towns: the Casino, built in 1837, was the first to be licensed in Europe. Also from that time are the Neo-Gothic English Church, the elegant Palazzo del Circolo dei Forestieri restaurant and the Cimitero Anglicano (Protestant Cemetery). Bagni di Lucca makes a good base for exploring the surrounding hills, cloaked in chestnut woods. You can walk to Montefegatesi, a hamlet surrounded by the peaks of the Alpi Apuane, and then continue to Orrido di Botri, a dramatic gorge.

The Ponte della Maddalena is a hump-backed bridge across the river Serchio, just north of the village of Borgo a Mozzano. It is called Ponte del Diavolo (Devil's Bridge) because, according to local legend, the Devil offered to build the bridge in return for possession of the first soul to cross it; the canny villagers agreed and, when it was finished, sent a dog across.

Insider tip

Wild Hot Springs

If you're on a budget, you can bathe for free in the centuries-old thermal waters at Equi Terme, in the heart of the Lunigiana. In southern Tuscany, there are stunning natural spa pools at Saturnia.

Google Map

4

The Garfagnana

V @ Castelnuovo di Garfagnana n Piazza dell'Erbe, Castelnuovo di Garfagnana; 0583 64 10 07

This mountainous region, which contains the Parco Naturale delle Alpi Apuane, can be explored from its unofficial "capital", Castelnuovo di Garfagnana, with its fortified old town and castle and bustling Thursday market. The tourist information centre and the office of the Garfagnano Ambiente e Sviluppo on Piazza dell'Erbe can both supply plenty of inspiration for things to do and see.

From Castelnuovo, a scenic drive takes you to the Alpe Tre Potenze. You can return via San Pellegrino and visit **Parco dell'Orecchiella**, a leafy nature park, and its lovely Orto Botanico Pánia di Corfino. It features a collection of local alpine plants of more than 400 species, including peonies, lilies, orchids and rhododendrons which offer a succession of blooms from spring to summer.

Parco dell'Orecchiella

⌂ Centro Visitatori, Orecchiella § 0583 61 90 98 # Park: Jun–Sep: daily; Apr–May & Oct: Sat & Sun ¢ Nov–Mar

Google Map

5

Barga

V @

Barga is the most attractive of the towns that line the Serchio valley, leading northwards from Lucca. The little walled town, with its steep streets paved with stone, is the setting for a highly

regarded opera festival usually held in July and August.

Barga’s Duomo stands on a grassy terrace at the highest point in the town. There are glorious views from here of the gleaming whitemarble and limestone peaks of the Alpi Apuane.

The 11th-century Duomo is dedicated to San Cristoforo (St Christopher). The exterior is decorated with interesting Romanesque carvings of interlaced knots, wild beasts and knights in armour. Over the north portal, a frieze thought to be a scene from a folk tale depicts a banquet.

Inside, a huge wooden statue of St Christopher dates to the 12th century, and there is a gilded tabernacle guarded by two charming terracotta angels by Luca della Robbia.

Most impressive of all is the massive marble pulpit, standing fully 5 m (16.5 ft) tall, supported by pillars that, in turn, rest on the back of man-eating lions. The work of Guido Bigarelli of Como, it dates from the early 13th century. The lively sculptures on the upper part depict the Evangelists, the Three Magi, the Annunciation, the Nativity and the Baptism of Christ.

▲ Lions guarding the main portal and pulpit of Barga's Duomo

Did You Know?

Many residents of Barga emigrated to Glasgow in the 1800s and the town now has close Scottish ties.

Google Map

6

Torre del Lago Puccini

V @ n Viale Kennedy 2; 0584 35 98 93

The composer Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) lived here, beside Lago di Massaciuccoli, so he could indulge his passion for shooting waterfowl. He and his wife are buried in the **Museo Villa Puccini**, in the mausoleum between the piano room and the gun room where he kept his rifle ("my second favourite instrument"). The operas are performed in the open-air theatre in summer. The reed-fringed lake is now a nature reserve.

▲ Monument to Puccini at Torre del Lago Puccini

"

Museo Villa Puccini

⌂ Viale Giacomo Puccini 266 § 0584 34 14 45 (Teatro Opera Puccini) # Hours vary, check website Σ giacomopuccini.it

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Google Map

7

The Versilia

V @ Viareggio n Viale Regina Margherita 1, Viareggio; visitversilia.net

The Versilia, sometimes called the Tuscan Riviera because of the many beach resorts that line this 30-km (18-mile) strip, stretches from Marina di Carrara in the north down to Marina di Torre del Lago Puccini. In the 1820s, towns such as Massa, Pietrasanta and Camaiore developed marinas and lidos along the part of the coast they controlled. These inland towns are linked by roads to their coastal twins. Here, villas and hotels with fine walled gardens line

the streets, with the mountains of the Alpi Apuane as a backdrop.

The beaches are divided into numerous bathing establishments run by hotels or private operators, who charge for use of the beach and its facilities. Forte dei Marmi is perhaps the most beautiful of these resorts; much favoured by wealthy Florentines and Milanese, it's packed with high-fashion boutiques. Equally popular is Viareggio, famous for its elegant "Liberty style" (Art Nouveau) villas and hotels, built in the 1920s after the original boardwalk and wooden chalets of the resort went up in flames in 1917. A fine example is the Gran Caffé Margherita, designed by Galileo Chini. Viareggio's carnival, held on Sundays from February to Lent and on Shrove Tuesday, is famous throughout Italy.

Google Map

8
Parco Naturale delle Alpi Apuane

V @ Castelnuovo di Garfagnana n Piazza dell'Erbe 1, Castelnuovo di Garfagnana; 0583 64 42 42

▲ Hikers passing farm buildings and mountain lodges in the Alpi Apuane

The Parco Naturale delle Alpi Apuane, northwest of Castelnuovo di Garfagnana, was designated a nature reserve in 1985. It is an area where spectacular jagged peaks and wooded valleys are crisscrossed by hiking trails and scenic mountain roads. Monte Pisanino is the highest peak in the area, at 1,945 m (6,320 ft). It towers above Lago di Vagli, an artificial lake covering the drowned village of

Fabbrica. Nearby are Vagli di Sotto and Vagli di Sopra, ancient villages with rugged stone houses. To the south, in the valley of the Turrite Secca, a spectacular mountain road leads to Seravezza, passing through a white-walled tunnel called the Galleria del Cipollaio. Northwest, at Arni, are the Marmitte dei Giganti (Giants' Cooking Pots), great hollows left by the glaciers of the Ice Age.

Southeast, at Calomini, is a 12th-century rock-cut hermitage, home to a Capuchin monk; just a few minutes away at Fornovolasco is the Grotta del Vento (Cave of the Wind), famed for its extraordinary rock formations. To the east, past Barga at Coreglia Antelminelli, is the **Museo della Figurina di Gesso**, devoted to the history of locally made plaster figurines once sold all over Europe.

"

Museo della Figurina di Gesso

⌂ Via del Mangano 17, Coreglia Antelminelli § 0583 780 82 # 9am–1pm Mon–Sat, 10am–1pm & 4–7pm Sun ¢ Oct–May: 9am–1pm Sun

Insider Tip

Lardo di Colonnata

This must-try delicious pork speciality has been made in the pretty village of Colonnata in the Alpi Apuane since 1000 CE. It is aged in marble vats with a mixture of salt, garlic, pepper and rosemary for at least six months.

Google Map

9

Pietrasanta

V n Piazza Statuto

This medieval town has long been a draw for sculptors from all over the world, thanks to the white marble quarried from the Alpi Apuane mountains that form the town's backdrop. More recently, artistic metal-casting foundries have been established here alongside the many marble workshops, and numerous famous artists come to work both in stone and bronze.

The **Museo dei Bozzetti**, in a former monastery, contains a fascinating collection of maquettes and scale models that have been used in preparation for artworks, including César's famous thumb sculpture. The town's Piazza Duomo is dominated by the 13th-

century Duomo di San Martino, with its splendid 14th-century façade. The adjacent brick campanile was to have been covered in marble but its real draw is the spectacular helical staircase inside by Donato Benti, the Florentine sculptor and architect believed to have been Michelangelo’s agent. A footpath and cycleway leads from the town to the nearby seaside resort of Marina di Pietrasanta and continues through the pines of the extensive Parco della Versiliana to Forte dei Marmi.

Museo dei Bozzetti

⌂ Via Sant’Agostino 1 Σ museodeibozzetti.it

Pietrasanta’s Contemporary Sculptures

▲*Eros Alato con Mano* by Igor Mitoraj

Over 70 modern sculptures by international artists decorate piazzas, gardens and other locations throughout Pietrasanta. Among them are works by Fernando Botero (born 1932) and Igor Mitoraj (1944–2014), both of whom had studios here.

Did You Know?

The first customer at the marble quarry on Monte Altissimo in the Alpi Apuane was Michelangelo.

Google Map

10
Carrara

V @ n Viale XX Settembre; 3775 49 48 21

Carrara is world famous for its white marble. The 300 or so quarries near the town date to Roman times, making this the oldest industrial site in continuous use in the world. In Carrara itself, there are myriad showrooms and workshops where the marble is sawn into sheets or sculpted into statues and ornaments. Many of the workshops welcome visitors. You can also discover more about the techniques of crafting marble at the **Museo Civico del Marmo**. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Carrara’s **Duomo** uses the local marble to full effect: it covers its Pisan-Romanesque façade, which features a rose window. In the same square is the house where Michelangelo used to stay on his visits to buy marble for his sculptures. The façade is marked by a plaque and by carvings of the sculptor’s tools.

Tour buses from Carrara regularly visit the quarries at Colonnata and at Fantiscritti, where a museum displays marble-quarrying techniques. By car, follow the numerous signs for the “Cave di

Marmo".

▲ Plaster casts lining Studi Nicoli, one of Carrara's many marble workshops

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Museo Civico del Marmo

⌂ Viale XX Settembre § 0585 84 57 46 # 11am–5pm Tue–Sun

Duomo

⌂ Piazza Duomo # Daily

Google Map

11

The Lunigiana

V @ Aulla n Piazza Gandhi; 3387 10 63 41

The Lunigiana (Land of the Moon) area is named after the port of Luni – so called because of the moon-like luminescence of the marble shipped from here in Roman times. This is good walking country, with pretty villages and many statuesque castles, including Fosdinovo, Aulla and Verrucola, just outside Fivizzano. This was the main town of the Lunigiana during Florentine rule; the Piazza Medicea has some splendid Renaissance palazzi and an elegant fountain (1683), and a small museum devoted to the history of

printing, which began here in 1471.

Google Map

12
San Miniato

@ n Piazza del Popolo; 0571 422 33

▲ The first rays of the rising sun, caught by the campanile of San Miniato

Straddling the crest of one of the region's highest hills, San Miniato manages to remain aloof from the industrial conurbation of the Arno valley. There are many fine historic buildings here, including the 13th-century Rocca (castle) built for Frederick II (1194–1250), the German Holy Roman Emperor.

The town played a major part in Frederick's Italian military campaigns. He dreamed of rebuilding the ancient Roman Empire that lay divided between papal and imperial authority. To this end, he conquered large areas of Italy. His battles fuelled fierce local struggles between the imperial Ghibellines and the papal Guelphs. Local people still refer to the town as San Miniato al Tedesco (of the German).

In the Piazza del Duomo, only the red-brick façade survives from the original 12th-century cathedral. The majolica plates set within it show evidence of trade with Spain or North Africa. They seem to represent the North Star and the constellations of Ursus Major and Minor: key reference points for early navigators.

The campanile, the Torre di Matilda, is named in honour of the great Countess Matilda, born in Livorno in 1046.

Did You Know?

A prestigious white truffle grown in the San Miniato hills is celebrated in a festival each November.

Google Map

13

Livorno

V @ g n Via Pieroni 18; 0586 89 42 36

The fact that Livorno is now a bustling city (it is Italy's second-busiest container port) is thanks to Cosimo di Medici I. In 1571, he chose Livorno, then a tiny fishing village, as the site for Tuscany's new port after Pisa's harbour silted up. From 1607 to 1621 the English marine engineer Sir Robert Dudley built the great sea wall that protects the harbour.

In 1608, Livorno was declared a free port, open to all traders, regardless of religion or race. People fleeing wars or religious persecution, including Jews, Protestants and Greeks, settled here and contributed greatly to the city's success.

When the architect Buontalenti planned the new city of Livorno in 1576, he envisaged the huge Piazza Grande at the heart of a network of wide avenues. The square's original appearance has, however, been lost. This is partly due to controversial postwar rebuilding, which cut the square into two halves: the present Piazza Grande to the south and the Largo Municipio to the north. In the former is the Duomo, a prominent victim of Livorno's wartime bombing. Formerly a 16th-century cathedral by Pieroni and Cantagallina, it was rebuilt in 1959, retaining only the original entrance portico, with its Doric arcades.

These have been attributed to Inigo Jones, who served his apprenticeship under the architect Buontalenti. Jones later used an almost identical design for the arcades of his Covent Garden piazza in London.

The Piazza Micheli contains Livorno's best-known monument: the *Monumento dei Quattro Mori*. Bandini's bronze figure of Duke Ferdinand I dates from 1595; Pietro Tacca's four enslaved people, also cast in bronze, were not added until 1626. Naked and manacled, the enslaved people are a stark reminder that Livorno

once had a large slave trade. From the Piazza Micheli there are views of the Fortezza Nuovo. Standing on the sea in a strategic position on the Medici port, this 16th-century fortress was built by Antonio da Sangallo the Elder to incorporate an existing medieval structure, including a square tower (the oldest part) and the tall, round Mastio di Matilde, which dates from the mid-13th century. The complex is often used for concerts and other events.

The Fortezza lies within an area known as Venezia Nuovo, or "New Venice", laid out in the 17th century along a series of canals. Although it only covers a few blocks, this is one of the city's most scenic areas.

South of the Fortezza Nuova, Piazza XX Settembre is renowned for its bustling "American Market" whose name derives from the large amounts of American army surplus that was sold here after World War II. A US army base, Camp Darby, still operates to the north of Livorno.

The perfect end to a day of sightseeing around the city is a sunset stroll on the Terrazza Mascagni. This vast, elegant terrace over the sea was built in the 1920s, and restored in the 1990s. The colonnades of the balustrade, chessboard paving and graceful gazebo make it a place of great charm.

▲ Colour-washed buildings and the octagonal Santa Caterina in Venezia Nuovo, Livorno

Insider Tip

Livorno by Boat

See the most attractive parts of historic Livorno from a different viewpoint with a boat tour through the pretty network of canals that were established in the 17th century *(livornoinbattello.it)*.

Via Francigena

This ancient pilgrim’s route from Canterbury in England to Rome passes through San Miniato and can be followed on foot, bike or horseback. The 15 stages, making up a total of 380 km (236 miles), are clearly signposted. There is an app *(viefrancigene.org)* and a good network of accommodation options *(viafrancigenatoscana.org)*.

Google Map

14 "

Certosa di Pisa

(località Calci) @ From Pisa § 050 93 84 30 # 9am–6pm Tue–Sat & 1st Sun of month (pre-booking is essential)

This Carthusian monastery was founded in 1366 and rebuilt during the 18th century. The splendid church is lavishly decorated, and some buildings form the University of Pisa’s **Museo di Storia Naturale**. Exhibits include 16th-century anatomical wax models. The unfinished campanile sits alongside and the church is backed by olive groves and the towering presence of Monte Serra. At 917 m (3,000 ft) above sea level, it is the highest of the Monti Pisani, which form a stunning backdrop to the village of Calci.

"

Museo di Storia Naturale

⌂ Certosa di Pisa # Jun–Sep: 9am–8pm daily; Oct–May: 9am–7pm Mon–Sat; 9am–8pm Sun & hols ¢ Public hols Σ msn.unipi.it

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Google Map

15

Pistoia

V @ n Palazzo dei Vescovi, Piazza del Duomo 1; 0573 216 22

▲ Pistoia's Duomo, with its substantial bell tower and octagonal Baptistry (1359)

The citizens of Pistoia acquired a reputation for viciousness and intrigue in the 13th century. The cause was a feud between two of the city's rival factions, the Neri and Bianchi (Blacks and Whites), that spread to involve other cities. Assassination in Pistoia's narrow alleyways was commonplace. The favoured weapon was a tiny but deadly dagger called a pistole, made by the city's ironworkers, who also specialized in surgical instruments. Pistoia still thrives on metalworking: everything from buses to mattress springs is made here.

Piazza Duomo, the main square in the historic centre, is dominated by the **Cattedrale di San Zeno** and its bulky campanile, originally built in the 12th century as a watchtower in the city walls. The interior is rich in funerary monuments, including the tomb of poet Cino da Pistoia, in the south aisle. He is shown in a relief (1337) lecturing to a class of young boys.

Nearby is the Cappella di San Jacobo, its remarkable silver altar decorated with more than 600 statues and reliefs, all added between 1287 and 1456. Nearly every silversmith of note in Tuscany contributed to the extraordinarily rich design, including

Brunelleschi. On the opposite side of the square is the Palazzo del Comune (town hall), which has the **Museo Civico** upstairs. Exhibits range from medieval altar paintings to the work of 20th-century Pistoian artists, architects and sculptors. Also in the square is the beautifully restored **Palazzo dei Vescovi**. In the basement of this bishop's palace you can see the excavated remains of Roman buildings. Upstairs is the Museo della Cattedrale, which has some fine reliquaries, crucifixes and chalices made by local goldsmiths between the 13th and 15th centuries. Visits are by guided tour only.

The church of **Sant'Andrea** is reached by walking through Piazza della Sala, the site of Pistoia's lively open-air market. Inside is Giovanni Pisano's pulpit (completed in 1301), considered by some to be his masterpiece, even more accomplished than the pulpit he later made for Pisa's Duomo. It is decorated with reliefs depicting scenes from the Life of Christ.

On Piazza Giovanni XXIII, the Ospedale del Ceppo is a former hospital and orphanage, founded in 1277. It was named after the *ceppo*, or hollowed-out tree trunk, that was used in medieval times to collect donations for its work. The striking façade of the main building features coloured and glazed terracotta panels (1514–25) by Giovanni della Robbia illustrating the Seven Works of Corporeal Mercy. The portico is by Michelozzo.

South of the Piazza Duomo, the work of Marino Marini (1901–80), Pistoia's most famous 20th-century artist, is housed in the **Centro Marino Marini** museum in the Palazzo del Tau. On display are drawings and casts, which trace the development of his style. Marini specialized in sculpting primitive forms in bronze and clay. His subjects included a horse and rider, and Pomona, the ancient Roman goddess of fertility. Nearby on the same street is the **Capella del Tau**. This chapel owes its name to the letter T (*tau* in Greek), which appeared on the cloaks of the monks who built it and symbolized a crutch. Inside the chapel there are frescoes of the creation and the life of St Anthony Abbot, who founded the order, which is dedicated to tending the sick and crippled.

Just north of the Cappella del Tau, on Via Cavour, is the 12th-century church of San Giovanni Fuorcivitas ("St John outside the city", since the church once stood beyond the city walls). Its north flank is strikingly clad in banded marble and there is a Romanesque relief of *The Last Supper* over the portal. Inside is Giovanni Pisano's holy water basin, carved in marble with figures of the Virtues, and

an equally masterly pulpit by Guglielmo da Pisa, carved in 1270 with New Testament scenes. Both works are among the finest of this period, when artists were reviving the art of carving.

▲ The tranquil interior of the Museo Civico

"

Cattedrale di San Zeno

⌂ Piazza Duomo § 0573 250 95 # Daily

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Museo Civico

⌂ Palazzo del Comune, Piazza Duomo # Hours vary, check website Σ musei.comune.pistoia.it

" '

Palazzo dei Vescovi

⌂ Piazza Duomo § 0573 287 82 # 10am–7pm Wed–Sun

Sant'Andrea

⌂ Via Sant'Andrea 21 § 0573 219 12 # 10am–1pm & 3–6pm Tue–Sat, 3–6pm Sun

"

Centro Marino Marini

⌂ Palazzo del Tau, Corso Silvano Fedi 30 # 10am–7pm Sat–Mon Σ museomarinomarini.it

Cappella del Tau

⌂ Corso Silvano Fedi 28 § 0573 242 12 # 8:30am–1:30pm Mon–Sat

Insider tip
Pistoia Blues Festival

This major event not only features blues but top rock, soul and jazz artists, who play to enthusiastic crowds in Piazza Duomo (*pistoiablues.com*).

Google Map

16
Collodi

n Piazza Carlo Collodi, 1; 0572 42 96 60

There are two main sights in this town: the **Villa Garzoni**, with its theatrical terraced gardens tumbling down the hillside and, for children, the **Pinocchio Park**.

The author of *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (1881), Carlo Lorenzini, was born in Florence, but his uncle was custodian of the Villa Garzoni and Lorenzini frequently stayed here as a child. Fond memories led him to use Collodi as his pen name, and, in 1956, the town decided to repay the compliment by setting up the theme park.

The park consists of gardens featuring mosaics and sculptural tableaux based on the adventures of the puppet, plus a maze, playground, exhibition centre and children's restaurant.

"
Villa Garzoni

⌂ Piazza della Vittoria 1 § 0572 42 73 14 # (Garden only) hours vary, call ahead

"
Pinocchio Park

⌂ Via san Gennaro 5 # 10am–7pm daily Σ pinocchio.it

Google Map

17
Montecatini Terme

@ n Viale Verdi 66; 0572 77 22 44

▲ The magnificent Terme Tettuccio in Montecatini Terme

Of all Tuscany's many spa towns, Montecatini Terme, with its beautiful formal gardens and distinguished spas, is the most interesting. Terme Leopoldine (1926), built in the style of a Classical temple, is named after Grand Duke Leopoldo I, who first encouraged the development of the town in the 18th century.

The most splendid spa is the Neo-Classical Terme Tettuccio (1925–8), with its circular, marble-lined pools, fountains and lovely Art Nouveau tiles depicting languorous nymphs. Terme Torretta, named after its mock-medieval tower, is noted for its tea-time concerts, while Terme Tamerici has beautifully tended gardens. Visitors can obtain day tickets to the spas to drink the waters and relax in the reading, writing and music rooms. More information is available from the Direzione delle Terme, at Viale Verdi 41.

A popular excursion from Montecatini Terme is to take the funicular railway up to the ancient fortified village of Montecatini Alto. In its quiet main piazza, there are antique shops and well-regarded restaurants with outdoor tables. From the Rocca (castle), there are sweeping views over the mountainous countryside. Nearby, at Ponte Buggianese, in San Michele church, you can see modern frescoes by the Florentine artist Pietro Annigoni (1910–88) on the theme of Christ's Passion.

▲ The interior of the Neo-Classical Terme Tettuccio

TAKING THE WATERS

Spa culture at Tuscany's hot springs has a long history. The Romans built bath complexes where army veterans who settled in towns such as Florence and Siena could relax. St Catherine of Siena (1347–80) , who suffered from scrofula, and Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–92), who was arthritic, both sought relief in the sulphurous waters at Bagno Vignoni. However, Tuscan spas really came into their own as high-society destinations in the early 19th century, when Bagni di Lucca became one of the most fashionable spas in Europe, frequented by emperors and kings.

Google Map

18

Monsummano Terme

@ n Piazza IV Novembre 75; 0572 95 92 28

Adored by the Medici family, the town of Monsummano grew around the Santuario di Santa Maria della Fontenuova (1602–5) built for Ferdinando I. The church is surrounded on three sides by a portico, where a series of lunettes (1630–33) by Giovanni da San Giovanni tell the legend of a shepherdess who found her lost sheep here thanks to an apparition of the Madonna. Ferdinando I also commissioned the Osteria dei Pellegrini lodgings for pilgrims, which now hosts the local history museum, the **Museo della Città e del Territorio**. Just outside the town at Villa Renatico Martini, the **Museo di Arte Contemporanea e del Novecento** has an intriguing collection of 20th–21st-century art. Monsummano is also famous for its spa waters: at the **Grotta Giusti** resort there is an atmospheric natural cave with hot underground waters.

Nearby, the tiny hilltop village of Monsummano Alto has fabulous views and castle ruins, while the views from the appealing village of Montevettolini, a 16th-century Medici hunting base, are even finer.

▲ Part of the Grotta Giusti spa establishment, Monsummano Terme

Museo della Città e del Territorio

⌂ Piazza Ferdinando Martini # Hours vary, check website Σ museoterritorio.it

Museo di Arte Contemporanea e del Novecento

⌂ Via Gragnano 349 # Hours vary, check website Σ macn.it

"

Grotta Giusti

⌂ Via della Grotta Giusti # Daily Σ grottagiustispa.com

Google Map

Pescia

@ n Via Fratelli Rosselli 2; 0572 45 28 83

Pescia's wholesale flower market is one of Italy's biggest, and there are some interesting sights in the city.

In the church of San Francesco are frescoes on *The Life of St Francis* (1235), by Bonaventura Berlinghieri. The artist knew St Francis and the frescoes are an accurate portrait of the saint. The Duomo, remodelled in Baroque style by Antonio Ferri in 1693, has a campanile with an onion-dome "cap" in 1771.

There is a collection of religious paintings and illuminated manuscripts in the **Museo Civico**, and the **Museo Archeologico della Valdinievole** displays finds from nearby Valdinievole, the pretty "Vale of Mist".

Museo Civico

⌂ Palazzo Galeotti, Piazza Santo Stefano 1 § 0572 49 00 57 # Hours vary, check website

Museo Archeologico della Valdinievole

⌂ Piazza Leonardo da Vinci 1 § 0572 47 75 33 # Hours vary, check website

Southwest Tuscany

▲ Rio Marina harbour, with a lighthouse guarding the curve of the bay

Introduction

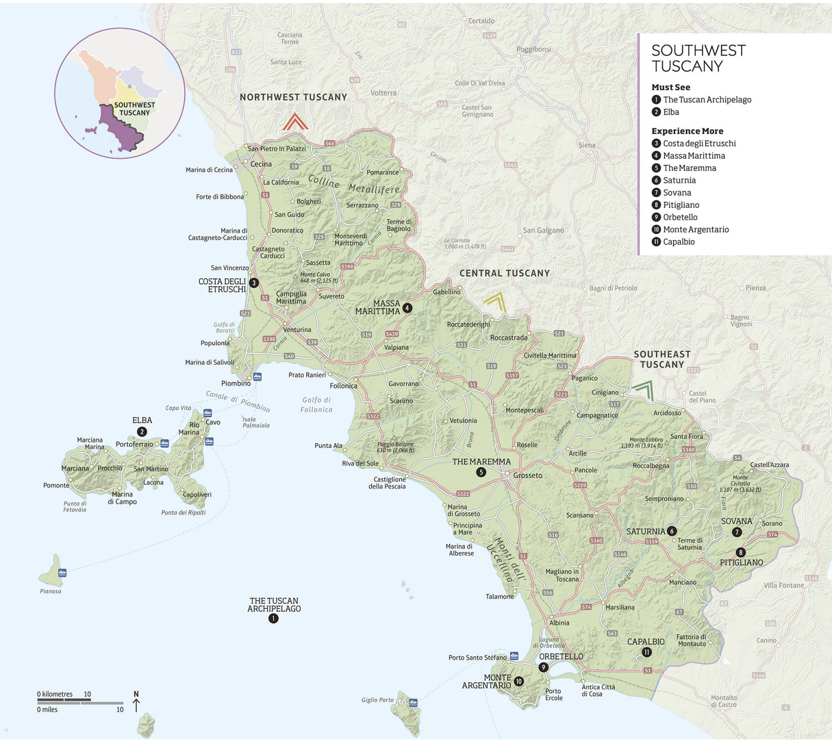
Area Map

Must Sees

Experience More

This corner of the region was first inhabited by the ancient Etruscans, who were attracted by the prolific mineral deposits; the iron, in particular, drew the Etruscans to Elba in the 8th century BCE. On the Costa degli Etruschi, Populonia (today an archaeological site) held an important position as one of 12 Dodecapoli (city-states). Both the Etruscans and the Romans drained the swamps of the Maremma to create richly fertile farming land, but it returned to wilderness after the collapse of the Roman Empire and the area saw little development for hundreds of years. In the 19th century Elba became home to Napoleon during his exile (1814–15); while there, the emperor ran the island efficiently, rationalizing the military, and the economic and social infrastructure. The marshland of the Maremma was reclaimed permanently around this time, and Monte Argentario – once an island – was firmly linked to the mainland by a dyke built across the Orbetello lagoon in 1842. Bolgheri, one of Italy’s most prestigious wine-making areas, rose to prominence in the 1970s as the producer of several Super Tuscans.

Area map
Southwest Tuscany



n Double-tap image to read the labels

Must Sees

1 The Tuscan Archipelago

2 Elba

Experience More

3 Costa degli Etruschi

4 Massa Marittima

5 The Maremma

6 Saturnia

7 Sovana

8 Pitigliano

9 Orbetello

10 Monte Argentario

11 Capalbio

Google Map

1

The Tuscan Archipelago

4 Isola di Capraia; 049 6 111 40 20 n Via Provinciale 9, Isola del Giglio; islepark.it

The six small islands that – together with the larger Elba – make up Tuscany's archipelago are idyllic natural paradises; restricted access to several only adds to their appeal as unspoiled havens. Terrain among the islands varies wildly from flat to mountainous, though all allow for sensational walking and watersports.

▲ Remains of the historic fort on Pianosa, as seen from the harbour

n Double-tap image to read the labels

Google Map

1 '

Gorgona

The northernmost island on the archipelago, Gorgona is also the smallest, measuring just 2 sq km (1 sq mile). Beautiful and wild, it has a hilly interior almost entirely covered in dense scrub, pretty coves and a rugged coastline nested by seabirds. There are two attractive fortresses – one built by the Medici and the other by the Pisans – and a tiny fishing village that dates from the 1700s. The island has hosted a detention centre since 1869 and only accompanied visits are permitted (with a maximum of 50 visitors

per day).

Google Map

2 '

Pianosa

Flat Pianosa was rich in agriculture in ancient times. Historic remains include traces of Roman baths at Cala Giovanna, two forts, and catacombs below the village. Access to much of the island is restricted to tours, which include mountain bike, kayak and snorkelling excursions.

Google Map

3 \ -

Capraia

Rocky Capraia measures 19 sq km (7 sq miles) and rises to nearly 500 m (1,640 ft) above sea level. It's the only island of the archipelago to have volcanic origins, visible in the reddish terrain at the Cala Rossa bay. The cluster of buildings around the port is connected to a second village by the island's only road, which slopes down from Forte San Giorgio, one of a series of 16th-century fortifications built during Genoese rule. There are a range of walks, from a 20-minute stroll to a seven-hour hike. Boat trips are available, plus there is a good choice of hotels and restaurants here.

Google Map

4

Montecristo

The looming granite mass of this island inspired Alexandre Dumas' famous 1844 work *The Count of Montecristo*. The island was originally named Mons Christi by monks who first arrived in the 5th century, fleeing persecution; the monastery was abandoned in 1553 following pirate attacks. As a protected nature reserve, access to the island is strictly limited, with a lengthy waiting list. There is a community of wild goats, but the only human inhabitants are the reserve wardens.

Insider tip

Island Activities

The archipelago is a top diving destination thanks to clear, unpolluted waters rich in shipwrecks and marine life. There is superb walking too; explore during the Tuscany Walking Festival *(tuscanywalkingfestival.it)*.

Google Map

5 \ - =

Giglio

With an area of 21 sq km (8 sq miles), Giglio is the largest island of the archipelago besides Elba. There is a good network of footpaths and some spectacular diving locations along the coast. Campese, the most modern of the island's three villages, has a long sandy beach that is popular with families and surfers. Ferries arrive at Giglio Porto, a pretty harbour with a 16th-century watchtower, shops, hotels and restaurants. The island is best known for its medieval hilltop village of Giglio Castello, which has a 12th-century Pisan castle, and its fruity white, Ansonica, which is celebrated with a wine festival in the last weekend of September.

▲ The pastel-coloured buildings of Giglio's attractive harbour

Google Map

6 '

Giannutri

This small, half-moon shaped island stretches only 5 km (3 miles) long and 500 m (1,640 ft) wide, and is home to the remarkable remains of an ancient Roman villa. Built between 90 and 100 CE, Villa Domizia was fronted by a large terrace with steps down to the sea, with associated structures including a cistern, baths, a harbour and fish works. The island has a rugged coastline with a series of caves and two pebbly beaches; it's freely accessible in parts while other areas can be seen with a guide.

Google Map

2

Elba

k Elba Airport g Piombino Marittima Σ visitelba.info

Elba's most famous resident was Napoleon, who spent nine months in exile here after the fall of Paris in 1814. Today the island is mainly populated by holiday-makers, who come to enjoy sandy beaches and watersports, on the west coast, and the more rugged scenery to the east.

▲ Rio Marina harbour, with a lighthouse guarding the curve of the bay

n Double-tap image to read the labels

Google Map

1
Portoferraio

@ 4 n Via Vittorio Emanuele II 2; 05651 93 35 89

The ferry from mainland Piombino arrives into Portoferraio, Elba's main port, which has a pretty harbour. The main sights are Napoleon's two houses. The **Palazzina Napoleonica** (also known as the Villa dei Mulini) stands in the centre of Portoferraio, a modest house built around two windmills. The emperor's country residence, **Villa San Martino**, had a Classical façade imposed on it by the Russian emigré Prince Demidoff in 1851. The house's Egyptian-style frescoes, painted in 1814, are a reminder of Napoleon's Nile campaigns of 1798–9.

"

Palazzina Napoleonica

⌂ Villa Napoleonica dei Mulini § 0565 91 58 46 # 9am–1:30pm Wed & Fri–Sun, 2–6:30pm Mon & Thu

"

Villa San Martino

⌂ San Martino § 0565 91 46 88 # 9am–1:30pm Tue, Thu, Sat & Sun; 2–6:30pm Wed & Fri

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Google Map

2

Marciana

@ n Via Santa Croce 34; 0565 90 12 15

On Elba's northwest coast is the lovely Marciana Marina, while further inland is the well-preserved medieval town of Marciana Alta. Here the **Museo Civico Archeologico** houses exhibits which were discovered on Etruscan ships that were found wrecked off the coast of Elba. There is also a cable car, which you can take up Monte Capanne, Elba's highest peak at 1,019 m (3,300 ft). Marciana makes a good base for exploring the island's western half.

"

Museo Civico Archeologico

⌂ Via del Pretorio 66, Marciana Alta § 3773 90 80 01 # Wed & Fri–Mon

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Google Map

3

Rio Marina

@ n Lungomare G Marconi 2, Gli Spiazzi; 0565 96 20 04

This intriguing village grew up around its harbour, which was built specifically to transport the iron ore that was mined nearby. There are still open-cast mines that extract the ores that attracted the Etruscans to Elba, and the **Museo dei Minerali** explains the geology of the island and the history of its local mining traditions.

"

Museo dei Minerali

⌂ Via Magenta 26 # Mar–Oct: 9am–12:30pm & 3:30–7pm Σ parcominelba.it/museum

Did You Know?

Elba and the other islands are home to Audouin's gull – the world's rarest species of seagull.

Google Map

4
Porto Azzurro

@ 4 n Via Cerboni 3

This pretty fishing village and popular seaside resort was founded in 1603 by Philip III of Spain, who intended to make it a strategic defensive centre. The imposing Forte Longone (now a prison) dominates the town from up high. On the seafront, Piazza Matteotti is the hub of local life, with concerts and events organized here in summer. The 17th-century Madonna di Monserrato, which was built to recall the Spanish church of Monserrat, is located just outside Porto Azurro. There is also a variety of scenic beaches, including Terranera beach, which is covered in black sand due to the local mineral pyrite.

Google Map

5
Capoliveri

@ 4 n Viale Australia 1

This appealing medieval hilltop village has sea views on both sides of the Monte Calamita promontory. The presence of large quantities of magnetite – which sends compasses haywire – on Monte Calamita has resulted in numerous legends regarding shipwrecks caused by the pull of the mineral. Visitors can tour the local mines, which once played a major role in the traditional life here, as well as enjoy the wealth of local beaches. The promontory is also home to the scenic Capoliveri Bike Park, which has over 100 km (60 miles) of trails of varying degrees of difficulty.

NAPOLEON ON ELBA

Napoleon himself chose Elba as the location for his exile. He was assigned sovereignty of the island under the 1814 Treaty of Fontainebleau, and was a popular and efficient ruler. His main residence in Portoferraio, the Palazzina Napoleonica, enjoys a panoramic position overlooking the coast and today houses a multimedia exhibition about its most famous owner.

Experience More

Google Map

3

Costa degli Etruschi

⌂ Livorno @ n Piazza Sant'Andrea, Cecina Σ visitcostadeglietruschi.com

The stunning stretch of coastline between Livorno and Piombino is known as Costa degli Etruschi due to the many traces of Etruscan settlements, particularly at the vast Parco Archeologico di Baratti e Populonia on the Baratti Gulf, where there are also remains of a Roman acropolis and an 11th-century Benedictine monastery.

This is a largely undeveloped area, rich in glorious vegetation and beautiful beaches with black or pale sand and rocky bays. There is a pleasing range of interesting villages and small towns, both on the coast and dotting the hills just inland. The views of Elba are spectacular from much of the area, including the tiny walled village of Popolonia Alta, where there are sections of fresco attributed to Il Sodoma in the 15th-century Santa Croce church. Other highlights of the area include the well-preserved medieval villages of Suvereto and Montescudaio and the prestigious resort of Castiglioncello, with reddish cliffs and pretty bays that have inspired both painters and writers. The attractive hill town of Castagneto Carducci and the nearby village of Bolgheri, both built around medieval castles owned by the noble Della Gherardesca family, are famous for their fine wines, and there is a multi-sensory wine museum, **MuSeM**, at the Casone di Ugolino estate with its 15th-century farm.

MuSeM

⌂ Via Casone di Ugolino 24, Castagneto Carducci § 0565 77 51 10 Σ casoneugolino.com

Google Map

4

Massa Marittima

@ n Piazza Garibaldi (0566 90 65 54)

▲ The Duomo in Massa Marittima's Piazza Guiseppe Garibaldi

The hill town of Massa Marittima is a surprising jewel with a prosperous history, thanks to the nearby mines of the Colline Metallifere where metal ores (copper, silver and lead) have been extracted since Etruscan times. The medieval Città Vecchia centres on the unusual, star-shaped Piazza Garibaldi, where the main monuments are located. They include the Romanesque Duomo, dedicated to St Cerbone, a 6th-century saint whose story is told in stone above the door, and the 13th-century Palazzo Podestà, which hosts the **Museo Archeologico**. Built in 1228, the **Torre del Candeliere** was reduced in height and linked to the 14th-century Fortezza Senese at a later date, while a bell was first added in 1413 and replaced by the current one in 1760. The views from the top are magnificent. Other worthwhile sights in the town are the **Museo della Miniera** (Museum of Mining), parts of which are located within a former mine shaft. The Fonte dell'Abbondanza on Via Ximenes is a large three-arched structure where local residents once came for their water. One of the original frescoes has recently been brought to light: *l'Albero della Fecondità*, in which two women pull each other's hair as they fight over the phallic fruit they are picking from a tree.

"

Museo Archeologico

⌂ Palazzo del Podestà, Piazza Garibaldi # Hours vary, check website Σ museidimaremma.it

"

Torre del Candeliere

⌂ Piazza Matteotti § 0566 90 65 54 # Hours vary, call ahead

" '

Museo della Miniera

⌂ Via Corridoni § 0566 90 65 25 # Fri–Sun

Google Map

5

The Maremma

⌂ Livorno/Grosseto V @

▲ Flamingos at the Riserva Naturale Diaccia Botrona, Castiglione della Pescaia

The ancient Etruscans were the first to inhabit the marshes of the Maremma, followed by the Romans, but after the collapse of the Roman Empire the area was virtually uninhabited until the 18th century. Although reclaimed land is now farmed here, the appearance and character of the Maremma is of a vast and largely wild area of natural beauty thanks to the **Parco Naturale della Maremma**, a protected nature reserve that stretches for 25 km (15 miles) along the coast. The Alberese visitor centre is the main entry point for the reserve, which has a good network of foot and cycle paths, as well as a beach, a series of look-out towers and a 12th-century Cistercian abbey.

Grosseto, the main town of the Maremma, has a late 13th-century Duomo with a striking black-and-white façade and well-preserved

16th-century walls. Its Museo Archeologico e d'Arte della Maremma has Etruscan and Roman artifacts, many from the ancient sites of Roselle and Vetulonia, just inland from Castiglione della Pescaia. This historic fishing village is now an attractive seaside resort while the more exclusive Punta Ala is popular with yacht owners and golfers.

" '

Parco Naturale della Maremma

⌂ Centro Visite Alberese, Via Bersagliere 7/9 # Daily Σ parco-maremma.it

Did You Know?

Bandits once roamed the Maremma; the most famous was Domenico Tiburzi, the "Robin Hood of Tuscany".

Super tuscans

When Tuscany's winemakers started breaking away from the strict regulations governing Chianti and experimenting with different blends, adding grapes such as Cabernet Sauvignon to their Sangiovese, the resulting wines could only be labelled "table wine" despite their indisputable quality. To set them apart from the rest, top-of-the-range wines like Tignanello, Ornellaia and Sassicaia are now referred to as the Super Tuscans.

Google Map

6

Saturnia

@ n Piazza Benvenuto di Giovanni

▲ Enjoying the thermal waters of Saturnia in natural rock pools

Saturnia is famous for its hot springs (which reach a toasty 37° C/98.6° F). According to legend they are the result of lightning sent by Saturn to calm humans' warring ways. The waters can be enjoyed for free in a lovely natural context at the rock pools of Cascate del Mulino, which is on the Gorello river just outside Saturnia. It is possible to bathe in the warm sulphur water here at any time of the day, all year round.

An alternative to the natural bathing pools is the **Terme di Saturnia**, a luxury hotel and day spa that provides excellent facilities, health treatments and even a golf course, all centred around the naturally heated and mineral-rich waters.

The ancient centre of Saturnia has several Roman remains, including the Porta Romana gate, while the striking medieval castle (not open to the public) was largely rebuilt in the early 20th century.

Near Saturnia, local administrative centre Manciano has wide-open views to all sides from its hilltop position, a 15th-century tower and the **Museo di Preistoria e Protostoria**, which recounts the history of the area from the Palaeolithic era to the Bronze Age, with multimedia displays to bring the ancient finds to life. The town also has a beautiful church dedicated to St George. Also nearby, the stunning walled medieval town of Montemerano stands on a hill covered in olive trees. The town wall is still largely intact and entry to Montemerano is through three gates. At the centre of the town is the Piazza del Castello, a charming square which is enclosed by historic stone houses and beautiful patches of wild flowers exploding with colours.

Terme di Saturnia

Σ termedisaturnia.it

Museo di Preistoria e Protostoria

⌂ Via Corsini 5, Manciano # 10am–1pm & 1:30–6pm Thu–Sun

Google Map

7

Sovana

Sovana sits on a ridge high above the Lente valley. Its main street is lined with cafés, restaurants and shops. The 13th-century Romanesque Rocca Aldobrandesca fortress (closed to the public), named after the Teutonic family that ruled in the area until 1608, is now in ruins.

The frescoes of the late 15th-century Siena school in the medieval church of **Santa Maria** were discovered under the whitewashed walls. The main altar is sheltered by a 9th-century canopy that was originally in the Romanesque **Duomo**. This 12th-century building incorporates sculpture from earlier churches built on the same site.

The Etruscans dug tombs nearby in the soft limestone cliffs bordering the river Lente. The most complete set of **Necropoli Etrusca** can be found in a valley just to the west of Sovana.

Santa Maria

⌂ Piazza del Pretorio # Daily

Duomo

⌂ Piazza Duomo # 9am–1pm & 3–8pm daily

Necropoli Etrusca

⌂ Poggio di Sopra Ripa § 0564 61 40 74 # 10am–6pm daily

Google Map

8

Pitigliano

@ n Piazza Garibaldi; 0564 61 71 11

Pitigliano looks spectacular perched on a plateau, high above cliffs carved out by the river Lente. The houses seem to grow out of the cliffs, which are riddled with caves cut out of soft limestone. The caves have been used for centuries to store wine and olive oil.

A maze of tiny medieval streets passes through the Jewish

quarter, formed when Jews fleeing from Catholic persecution in Rome took refuge here in the 17th century, when Pitigliano was a frontier town between the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Papal States. The town's offer of protection earned it the nickname "little Jerusalem".

The splendid interior of the sturdy, fortress-like Palazzo Orsini in the town centre, the oldest parts of which date from the 13th century, hosts the **Museo Palazzo Orsini**, which includes a wooden statue carved by Jacopo della Quercia alongside ancient manuscripts, religious paintings and gold and silver items. There is also a small exhibition of work by the artist Francesco Zuccarelli, who was born in Pitigliano in 1702. One of his first commissions, following his apprenticeship in Rome and then Florence, was a pair of chapel altarpieces that can be seen in the medieval **Duomo**, whose huge bell tower supports a bell that weighs 3 tonnes. The **Museo Civico Archeologico** contains a range of finds from ancient local settlements.

▲ A picture-perfect narrow street in the old town of Pitigliano

"

Museo Palazzo Orsini

⌂ Piazza della Fortezza Orsini # 10am–1pm & 3–7pm daily (to 5pm in winter) Σ palazzo-orsini-pitigliano.it

Duomo

⌂ Piazza San Gregorio # Daily

Museo Civico Archeologico

⌂ Piazza della Fortezza Orsini 59 § 0564 61 40 67 # 10am–6pm daily (to 4pm in winter)

Insider tip

Etruscan Footpaths

Bordering Tuscany, Lazio and Umbria, the area known as Tuscia is rich in Etruscan remains. Just outside Pitigliano is the Vie Cave, ancient footpaths carved into the rock face. An afternoon's walk along these pathways is recommended.

Did You Know?

The Palazzo Orsini in Pitigliano has its water supply brought in by an aqueduct built in 1545.

Google Map

9

Orbetello

V @ n Piazza della Repubblica 1; 0564 86 04 47

The town of Orbetello perches on a spit of land jutting into a sheltered lagoon, which at its tip is connected by a causeway to the promontory of Monte Argentario.

Sections of ancient Etruscan wall are still visible flanking the canal that links the two halves of the lagoon. The town walls were built during Spanish rule (15th–16th century), as was the **Polveriera Guzman** (1692), a former arsenal now home to the Museo Archeologico. The façade of the Duomo, built in the 13th century but altered over the centuries, has a splendid rose window. The **Ex-Caserma Umberto I** displays the Frontone di Talamone, a fragmented ancient Etruscan terracotta temple decoration with incredibly fine sculpting.

The WWF-protected **Oasi di Orbetello** nature reserve is a paradise for bird-watchers, thanks to its location on migratory routes, while a windmill, the last of nine built here in the 15th century, adds a scenic touch.

Near Orbetello, the ancient Roman colony of Cosa (founded 173 BCE) has some fascinating remains including complex plumbing work, as well as spectacular sea views. The **Museo di Cosa,** containing relics from the ancient settlement, is close by.

Polveriera Guzman

⌂ Viale Mura di Levante 7 # 6pm–11pm Sat & Sun

Ex-Caserma Umberto I

⌂ Piazza Repubblica 1

Oasi di Orbetello

⌂ SS Aurelia 148 km, Località Ceriolo III, Albinia # Sep–May: 9:30am–3:30pm Sat–Sun (last entry 1:30pm) Σ wwf.it

"

Museo di Cosa

⌂ Via delle Ginestre § 0564 88 14 21 # 9:45am–6:30pm Fri–Sun

Did You Know?

From late winter and early spring, flocks of migrating flamingos can be seen in the Orbetello lagoon.

Google Map

10
Monte Argentario

@ n Piazzale del Valle, Porto Santo Stefano; 0564 33 20 75 Σ monteargentario.info

▲ The sheltered azure waters of Porto Ercole, on Monte Argentario

Monte Argentario was an island until the early 18th century, when the shallow waters separating it from the mainland began to silt up. Two sandy spits of land, known as *tomboli*, were created, enclosing the Orbetello lagoon. The two harbour towns of Porto Ercole and Porto Santo Stéfano are favoured by wealthy yacht owners. There are good fish restaurants in both, and from the Strada Panoramica there are views of rocky coves, cliffs and bays.

The many fortifications that dot the landscape date mostly from

the 16th century; one of the most spectacular is the star-shaped **Forte Stella**, near Porto Ercole. A boat trip is a great way to see the peninsula and there are plenty on offer.

"

Forte Stella

Daily; Apr–Jun, Sep: 10:30am–12:30pm & 4–6pm; Jul–Aug: 5–9pm

Watersports and Walking

Monte Argentario is full of opportunities for sports lovers. The peninsula is crossed by a good network of footpaths with routes suitable for all levels. Watersports are highly popular; there are excellent facilities for yachters, and boats of all kinds can be rented. The biggest year-round draw is diving; the numerous dive centres also provide lessons.

Google Map

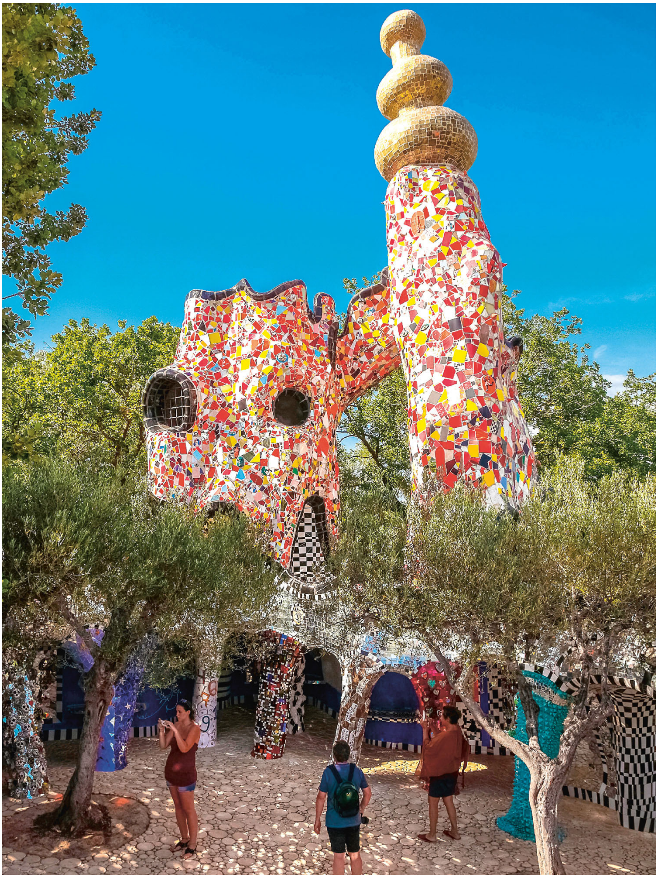
11

Capalbio

@

Like Porto Ercole, Capalbio is popular with wealthy Italians and its beaches and restaurants are busy in summer. Behind them rises a charming medieval hilltop village dominated by a 12th-century castle with stunning views over the coastline and countryside from the well-preserved surrounding walls. The church of San Nicola has some charming 14th–15th century frescoes.

At Pescia Fiorentina, southeast of Capalbio, is a modern sculpture garden created by the late French artist Niki de Saint-Phalle between 1978 and 2002. The **Giardino dei Tarocchi** was inspired by the figures of the Tarot; the bigger pieces each represent one card from the Tarot pack. Among the sculptures is *The Tower*, a glittering three-storey edifice made out of broken mirrors. The garden can be visited by group tour only.


▲ The weird and wonderful sculptures of the Giardino dei Tarocchi, Capalbio

" '

Giardino dei Tarocchi

⌂ Garavicchio, Capalbio Grosseto Σ giardinodeitarocchi.it

◀ Contents

Need to know

▲ A classic cypress-lined scene in Val d’Orcia

Before You Go

Getting Around

Practical Information

Before
You Go

Things change, so plan ahead to make the most of your trip. Be prepared for all eventualities by considering the following points before you travel.

Passports and Visas

For entry requirements, including visas, consult your nearest Italian embassy or check the **Polizia di Stato** website. EU nationals and citizens of the UK, US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand do not need visas for stays of up to three months but in future must apply in advance for the European Travel Information and Authorization System (**ETIAS**); roll-out has continually been postponed so check website for details.

Polizia di Stato

Σ poliziadistato.it

ETIAS

Σ etiasvisa.com

Government Advice

Now more than ever, it is important to consult both your and the Italian government's advice before travelling. The **UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office**, the **US State Department,** the **Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade** and the **Italian Ministero della Salute** offer the latest information on security, health and local regulations.

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Σ smartraveller.gov.au

Italian Ministero della Salute

Σ salute.gov.it

UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

Σ gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

US State Department

Σ travel.state.gov

Customs Information

You can find information on the laws relating to goods and currency taken in or out of Italy on the ENIT (Italy's national tourist board) website.

Insurance

We recommend that you take out a comprehensive insurance policy covering theft, loss of belongings, medical care, cancellation and delays, and read the small print carefully. UK citizens are eligible for emergency medical care in Italy at a reduced cost or sometimes for free provided they have a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)or UK Global Health Insurance Card (**GHIC**).

GHIC

Σ ghic.org.uk

Vaccinations

No vaccinations are needed for Italy, but mosquito repellent is useful in summer. For information regarding COVID-19 vaccination requirements, consult government advice.

Booking Accommodation

Florence and Tuscany offer a variety of accommodation. At peak season lodgings fill up and prices become inflated, so book in advance. All accommodation providers are obliged to add a tourist tax to rates. This varies from €1 to €5 per night, for a maximum of 7 nights; under 12s are exempt. Check if the tourist tax is included in quoted rates.

Under Italian law, hotels are required to register guests at police headquarters and issue a receipt of payment *(ricevuta fiscale)*.

Money

Major credit and debit cards are accepted widely and contactless payments are common. Cash is still required for smaller payments and in markets or more remote areas. ATMs *(bancomat)*, found outside most banks, are less common in smaller villages. Tipping is not expected in restaurants or by taxi drivers, but hotel porters and housekeeping will expect €1 per bag or day.

Travellers with Specific Requirements

The steep and cobbled streets in Tuscany's old town centres present difficulties for visitors with reduced mobility. Historic buildings often lack lifts or ramps, but hotels, restaurants and bars have accessible, well-equipped bedrooms and bathrooms.

Both Florence and Pisa (see Arriving by Air) airports provide special assistance; reserved at least 48 hours in advance. **RFI** offers assistance at railway stations; check for details on the website and at the Sala Blu point at Florence's Santa Maria Novella station.

Moveris arranges tours for travellers with specific requirements in Florence and Tuscany. Museums like the Uffizi Gallery offer multi-sensory tours.

Moveris

Σ moveris.it

RFI

Σ rfi.it

Language

Italian is the official language spoken in Florence and Tuscany. At least a modest level of English is spoken widely throughout the region.

Opening Hours

Situations can change quickly and unexpectedly. Always check before visiting attractions and hospitality venues for up-to-date hours and booking requirements.

Lunchtime
Churches and smaller shops shut for two or three hours, around 12:30–3:30pm.

Monday
Many museums close all day.

Sunday
Churches do not allow tourists to visit during Mass, unless they wish to participate.

Public holidays
Shops either close early or for the whole day; museums and

public transport adopt Sunday hours.

At a Glance

Currency

Euro

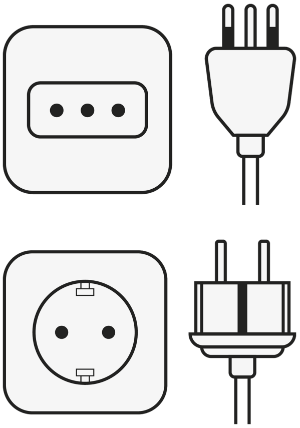
Average daily spend

essential phrases

Hello	Buongiorno / ciao
Goodbye	Arrivederci / ciao
Please	Per favore
Thank you	Grazie
Do you speak English?	Parla inglese?
I don't understand	Non ho capito

Electricity Supply

Power sockets are type F and L, fitting two- and three-pronged plugs. Standard voltage is 220–230v.



PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

1 Jan	New Year's Day
6 Jan	Epiphany
Mar/Apr	Easter Sunday
Mar/Apr	Easter Monday
25 Apr	Liberation Day
1 May	Labour Day
2 Jun	Republic Day
15 Aug	Ferragosto
1 Nov	All Saints' Day
8 Dec	Immaculate Conception
25 Dec	Christmas Day
26 Dec	St Stephen's Day

Getting
Around

Whether you are visiting for a short city break or rural country retreat, discover how best to reach your destination and travel like a local.

Arriving by Air

International and domestic flights arrive at Pisa and Florence. Pisa's Galileo Galilei airport is the biggest international airport in Tuscany and has multiple connections to the UK and to most European countries. Galileo Galilei is located just 1 km (half a mile) from the centre of Pisa; the **PisaMover** transit service (operated by Trenitalia) takes only 5 or 6 minutes from the airport to Pisa Centrale station, from where it is about an hour by train to Florence, 30 minutes to Lucca or 2 hours to Siena.

Florence's Amerigo Vespucci airport is smaller and offers direct flights only to major European capitals and business cities. It is situated about 4 km (2 miles) from the city centre. Transfers are operated by **Volainbus**, a 20-minute shuttle that connects every half hour to Autostazione, Florence's main bus station.

PisaMover

Σ pisa-mover.com

Volainbus

Σ at-bus.it

Train Travel

International Train Travel

Regular trains connect Italy to the main towns and cities in France, Switzerland, Austria and Eastern Europe, and journeys should be reserved in advance. You can buy tickets and passes for multiple international journeys via **Eurail** or **Interrail**; however, you may still need to pay an additional reservation fee depending on which rail service you travel with. Always check that your pass is valid before boarding.

Eurail

Σ eurail.com

Interrail

Σ interrail.eu

Regional Trains

Trenitalia is the main operator in Italy; safety and hygiene measures and ticket information can be found online. Tickets for journeys on standard trains (Regionale) in Tuscany can also be bought at tobacconists and lottery outlets.

High-speed rail services (*alta velocità* or AV) are provided from Florence and Pisa to cities outside the region by Trenitalia; private company **Italo Treno** also offers high-speed services from Florence only. High-speed trains need reservations with allocated seating. For the cheapest prices, book between 90 and 120 days in advance. Note that of Florence's ten railway stations, Santa Maria Novella is its central hub.

Train tickets must be validated before boarding by stamping them in machines at the entrance to platforms (digital tickets excluded). Fines are applied if you are found with an unvalidated ticket; if you are unable to validate a ticket before boarding go immediately to the ticket inspector.

Trenitalia

Σ trenitalia.com

Italo Treno

Σ italotreno.it

Public Transport

Most Tuscan towns and cities provide efficient local bus services (plus trams in Florence), but the more rural areas are often poorly served, especially on Sundays and public holidays when there is a reduced timetable.

Buses and Trams

Tickets should be bought in advance and are available from dedicated kiosks, newsagents and tobacconists as well as some bars; ten-journey tickets can be bought at a reduced rate (€14/€11). All tickets must be validated at the time of boarding; validation machines can be found inside the bus or tram. Tickets are also

available on board from the driver but cost more (€2.50).

Ticket prices are standardized in Tuscany, with one rate for the ten provincial capitals (€1.50) and another for elsewhere (€1.20); local transport tickets for one town are not valid in another.

Long-Distance Bus Travel

Long-distance buses are the best way to reach many destinations within Tuscany, particularly the more hilly or mountainous areas of the region not served by railways, or where stations are at a distance from the historic centre.

Autolinee Toscane connects Mugello and northeastern Tuscany with Florence and Arezzo, as well as the north and much of the west (including Elba). **Tiemme** operates throughout the southern half of the region.

Long-distance services within Italy, including numerous Tuscan destinations, are provided by **Autolinee Baltour**. **Flixbus** runs a low-cost bus service to Italian and European destinations.

Autolinee Baltour

Σ baltour.it

Autolinee Toscane

Σ at-bus.it

Flixbus

Σ flixbus.it

Tiemme

Σ tiemmespa.it

Guided Bus Tours

City Sightseeing runs hop-on hop-off tours of Florence and Livorno with audioguides in a variety of languages.

City Sightseeing

Σ city-sightseeing.it

Taxis

Official registered taxis in Italy are white and can be found in strategic locations around all Tuscan cities; it is illegal for taxis to stop in the street if hailed. Unofficial taxis should be avoided, as should drivers who come into stations or airports offering their

services; official taxi drivers do not do this.

Tariffs are displayed inside taxis and a meter should be visible and running during the entire journey, except for fixed-tariff journeys, such as from Florence or Pisa airport to the city centre. Supplements are added for luggage and journeys at night. If you are planning a long journey by taxi it's a good idea to ask for an estimate before leaving. There is a long list of estimated fees for out-of-town destinations from Pisa on the **Cotapi** official taxi website.

Taxis in Italy aren't particularly cheap. Many taxis do not accept credit card payments so if you wish to pay by card, specify this when calling or ask if the service is available before leaving. Those in groups of more than three people or those with specific requirements or transporting lots of luggage should specify this information when booking, to ensure that a suitable vehicle is sent.

Cotapi, Pisa

Σ cotapi.it

Driving

A road trip through Tuscany is the best way to see the more remote parts of the region and gives you the freedom to choose when and where to go. However, it can also be a hair-raising experience at times. Italians have a reputation for driving erratically, so make sure you are familiar with the rules of the road.

Driving to Florence and Tuscany

Florence and Tuscany are easily reached from other European countries via the International European Road Network that connects major roads across national borders within Europe. Once in Italy, the A1 motorway *(autostrada)* runs from north to south from Milan to Naples, passing through Florence and Tuscany, while the A12, intended to link Genoa to Rome along Italy's west coast, currently ends just south of Livorno before reappearing in Lazio for the last section to Rome. The A11 links Florence to Pisa via Prato, Pistoia and Lucca.

Tolls are payable on motorways in Tuscany and in most of Italy; drivers must take a ticket from an automatic machine on entering the motorway and this is used to calculate the toll automatically at the exit. To avoid queuing to leave the motorway, pay by credit card and choose one of the lanes designated for card payments or

invest in a prepaid Viacard, available at one of the Punto Blu offices near many motorway exits. Avoid the dedicated Telepass lanes, which are for Telepass account holders with the relevant electronic reader.
If you wish to avoid toll roads, there is usually an alternative route signposted. In Italy road signs for motorways are green, whereas toll-free main roads have blue signs. The **ACI** (Automobile Club d'Italia) website has a section in English with useful information for visiting motorists.

ACI
Σ aci.it

Car Rental

To rent a car in Italy you must be over 18 and have a valid EU driving licence or International Driving Permit. Most rental companies require you to have held a licence for at least one year; some have a minimum age of 21 and most apply young driver surcharges for under 25s. You also need to have a credit card as guarantee.

Driving in Florence and Tuscany

Many of the region's cities, towns and villages have well-preserved historic centres that are only accessible to residents' vehicles; other cars entering the limited traffic zone (*zona a traffico limitato*, or ZTL) are subject to fines. If you're staying at a hotel in the centre, ask in advance about access; this is usually possible, at least for depositing and collecting bags, but you will need to advise staff of your registration number to avoid incurring fines.

It's a good idea to park outside the centre and explore on foot, even where there isn't a limited traffic zone, as the narrow and steep streets of many areas can be challenging to drive through.

Parking spaces marked with blue lines are subject to payment and there should be a meter nearby; yellow lines signal restrictions such as parking for residents or the disabled only, or for loading and unloading (a sign will detail the specifics); white lines indicate free parking.

Rules of the Road

Drive on the right, use the left lane only for passing, and give way to traffic from the right. Seat belts are required for all passengers in

the front and back, and heavy fines are levied for using a mobile phone while driving.

During the day dipped headlights are compulsory when driving on motorways, dual carriageways and on all out-of-town roads. A red warning triangle and fluorescent vest must be carried at all times, for use in the event of an emergency. Between mid-November and mid-April it is obligatory to carry winter tyres or snow-chains on all vehicles except motorcycles.

If you have an accident or breakdown, switch on your hazard warning lights and place a warning triangle 50 m (55 yd) behind your vehicle. In the event of a breakdown, call the ACI freephone emergency line (803-116 from an Italian phone; 800-116800 from a non-Italian mobile phone) or the emergency services (112 or 113). The legal drink-drive limit is strictly enforced. If you are drinking alcohol, use public transport or take a taxi.

Hitchhiking

Hitchhiking *(autostop)* is illegal on motorways, and is not commonplace in large cities such as Florence. In more rural areas it is an uncommon but not unheard of transport method for travellers on a budget. Always consider your own safety before entering an unknown vehicle.

Cycle and Scooter Hire

Tuscany has more *strade bianche* – gravel-surfaced “white roads” – than any other Italian region, and they are perfect for exploring the countryside by bike. **Florence by Bike** and numerous other agencies rent out city bikes, race bikes, mountain bikes and e-bikes, and most hotels can organize this, sometimes with special rates. Bike-sharing schemes also operate in most of Tuscany’s major cities. The **Piste Ciclabili** website has an interactive map of cycle paths throughout Italy.

Scooters are another great way to see more of the countryside and they can be hired at numerous places around the region, especially in the Chianti area and in Florence. An ordinary driving licence is sufficient for vehicles up to 125cc in Italy; helmets are obligatory.

Florence by Bike

Σ florencebybike.it

Piste Ciclabili

Σ piste-ciclabili.com

Walking

Wandering around Tuscany's main cities and towns is one of the most enjoyable aspects of any trip to this picturesque area. Many urban areas are largely pedestrianized and it's often easier to travel on foot than by bus. You can stop at viewpoints, pop into local cafés and easily take in several of the main tourist sights within a couple of hours. There are also many scenic long walks and hikes through Tuscany's countryside.

Ferries

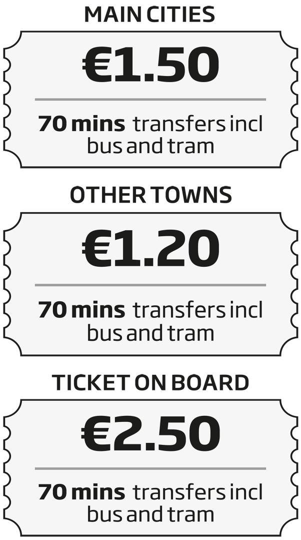
Toremar is the main ferry company for Elba and the islands of the archipelago, operating from the ports of Livorno (to Gorgona and Capraia), Piombino (to Portoferraio, Cavo and Rio Marina on Elba and to Pianosa) and Porto Santo Stefano (to Giglio and Giannutri). Hydrofoil services are also available for Cavo and Portoferraio on Elba. Advance booking is advisable. Get to the port an hour early if taking a car.

Toremar

Σ toremar.it

At a Glance

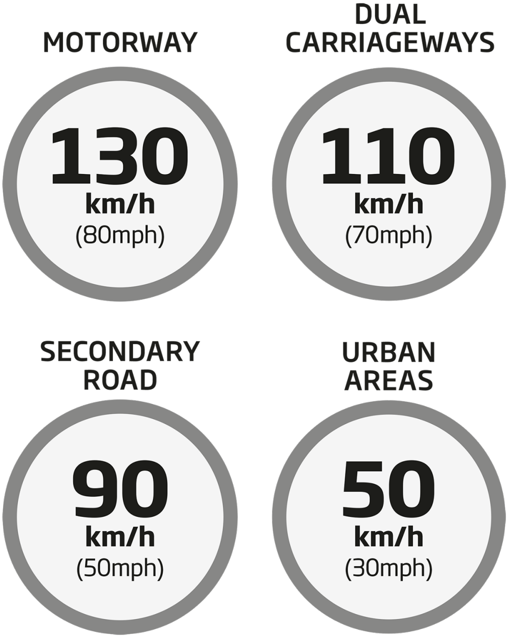
Public Transport costs



TOP TIP

Avoid on-the-spot fines – be sure to stamp your ticket to validate your journey.

Speed Limit


MOTORWAY
130
km/h
(80mph)
DUAL CARRIAGEWAYS
110
km/h
(70mph)
SECONDARY ROAD
90
km/h
(50mph)
URBAN AREAS
50
km/h
(30mph)

GETTING TO AND FROM THE AIRPORT

Airport	Transport	Price	Journey time
Pisa	People Mover shuttle (PisaMover)	€5 (€10 return)	5 mins
	Taxi	€9	10 mins
Florence	Bus (Volainbus)	€6 (€10 return)	20 mins
	Taxi	€22	20 mins

RAIL JOURNEY PLANNER

Showing Tuscany's key train routes, this map is a handy reference for rail travel in the region. Journey times are listed below.

Florence to Arezzo	50–100 mins
Florence to Lucca	80–100 mins
Florence to Pisa	65–85 mins
Florence to Siena	90–110 mins
Siena to Grosseto	80–90 mins

Practical
Information

A little local know-how goes a long way in Florence and Tuscany. Here you can find all the essential advice and information you will need during your stay.

Personal Security

Tuscany is a safe region to visit in Italy. Though rare, pickpocketing and bag-snatching can happen, especially around busy tourist sights and on crowded buses. Take the usual precautions to keep valuables and other belongings safe and beware of leaving items unattended, especially on beaches.

If you have anything stolen, report the crime within 24 hours at the nearest police station (Polizia or Carabinieri), and remember to take your ID with you. Make sure that you get a copy of the crime report *(denuncia)* if you need to make an insurance claim.

Contact your embassy if you have your passport stolen, or in the event of a serious crime or accident.

As a rule, Italians are very accepting of all people, regardless of their race, gender or sexuality. Homosexuality was legalized in 1887, and in 1982, Italy became the third country in the world to recognize the right to legally change your gender. If you do feel unsafe in Florence, the **Safe Space Alliance** pinpoints your nearest place of refuge.

Women may sometimes receive unwanted and unwelcome male attention, especially around tourist areas. If you feel threatened, head straight for the nearest police station.

Safe Space Alliance

Σ safespacealliance.com

Health

Italy has a world-class healthcare system. Emergency medical care in Italy is free for all EU and Australian citizens. If you have an EHIC card or Australian Medicare card, be sure to present this as soon as possible. You may have to pay for treatment and reclaim the money later.

For visitors coming from outside the EU and Australia, payment of hospital and other medical expenses is the patient's responsibility. It is therefore important to arrange comprehensive medical insurance before travelling.

Seek medicinal supplies and advice for minor ailments at pharmacies *(farmacia)*. You can find details of the nearest 24-hour service on all pharmacy doors.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Smoking is banned in enclosed public places. Possession of narcotics is prohibited and could result in a prison sentence.

Italy has a strict limit of 0.5g/l BAC (blood alcohol content) for drivers. For drivers with less than three years' driving experience the limit is 0.

ID

By law you must carry identification with you at all times in Italy. If you are stopped by the police you may be asked to present the original document within 12 hours.

Sustainable Travel

Overtourism continues to be a problem in Florence. Refilling water bottles in the city's many free water fountains, turning off your air conditioning and taking trains to hop around Tuscany are a few of the ways to help make travel more sustainable. You can be fined for dropping litter and sitting on steps outside certain monuments and it is an offence to climb into public fountains.

Illegal street traders operate in many of Tuscany's city centres; avoid making any purchases to avoid fines.

It is also illegal to take sand, shells and stones from Tuscany's beaches (except during specially authorized trips, such as the mineral-hunting experiences organized on Elba).

Visiting Churches and Cathedrals

Entrance to many churches in the region is free, although there are admission fees for the more famous monuments, mainly in the cities, and in others you may be charged a small fee to see a certain area, such as a chapel, cloister or underground ruins.

Strict dress codes apply: cover your torso and upper arms, and ensure shorts and skirts cover your knees. Shoes must be worn.

Mobile Phones and Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is generally widely available, and cafés, bars, restaurants and some cultural venues will usually allow you to use their Wi-Fi on the condition that you make a purchase. Some city centres have free Wi-Fi hotspots; ask at tourist offices or hotels for information or install the WiFi.Italia.It app.

Visitors travelling to Italy with EU tariffs can now use their devices abroad without being subject to the high roaming charges of the past. Users will be charged the same rates for data, voice calls and SMS services as they would pay at home. Note that usage within the EU may or may not be included in your contract, so be sure to check before you depart.

Post

Stamps *(francobolli)* are sold at newsagents (*tabacchi* – look for a blue sign with a white T). Avoid the private tourist postal services with yellow letterboxes at souvenir stalls and postcard shops, as they cost more and usually take longer.

Taxes and Refunds

VAT (IVA) is usually 22%. Under certain conditions, non-EU citizens can claim a refund. Claim the rebate before you buy (show your passport to the shop assistant and complete a form) and later present a Customs officer with your receipts as you leave. Bring stamped receipts back to the vendor to issue a refund. Information is available from international tax-free shopping organizations such as **Global Blue**.

Global Blue

Σ globalblue.com

Discount Cards

In Florence, the **Firenzecard** provides entry to many museums and sites and is valid for 72 hours from its first use. The Firenzecard+ also covers public transport and can be used for discounts at affiliated restaurants and shops.

In other cities cumulative tickets are sometimes available for a selection of sights.

Firenzecard

Σ firenzecard.it

At a Glance

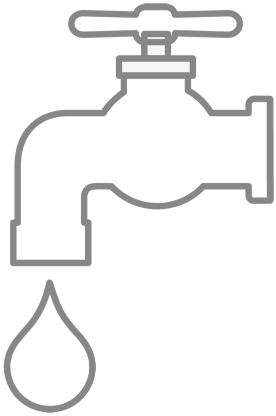
EMERGENCY NUMBERS

GENERAL EMERGENCY	AMBULANCE
112	118
FIRE SERVICE	**POLICE**
115	113

Time zone

CET/CEST: Central
European Summer Time (CEST) runs from the last Sun in Mar to the last Sun in Oct.

Tap water



Unless otherwise stated, tap water in Florence and Tuscany is safe to drink.

WEBSITES AND APPS

ENIT

Check out Italy's national tourist board website at italia.it

Visit Tuscany

The official tourism website for Tuscany at visittuscany.com

The Tuscany Region Travel Planner

A useful resource for planning your trip can be found here: discovertuscany.com/itineraries-in-tuscany

WiFi.Italia.It

Connect to free Wi-Fi hotspots throughout Tuscany and Italy.

◄ Contents

PHRASE BOOK

In an Emergency

Help!	**Aiuto!**	*eye-yoo-toh*
Stop!	**Ferma!**	*fair-mah*
Call a doctor	**Chiama un medico**	*kee-ah-mah oon meh-dee-koh*
Call an ambulance	**Chiama un' ambulanza**	*kee-ah-mah oon am-boo-lan-tsa*
Call the police	**Chiama la polizia**	*kee-ah-mah lah pol-ee-tsee-ah*
Call the fire brigade	**Chiama i pompieri**	*kee-ah-mah ee pom-pee-air-ee*
Where is the telephone?	**Dov'è il telefono?**	*dov-eheel teh-leh- foh-noh?*
The nearest hospital?	**L'ospedale più vicino?**	*loss-peh-dah-leh pee-oovee-chee-noh?*

Communication Essentials

Yes/No	**Si/No**	*see/noh*
Please	**Per favore**	*pair fah-vor-eh*
Thank you	**Grazie**	*grah-tsee-eh*
Excuse me	**Mi scusi**	*mee skoo-zee*
Good morning	**Buon giorno**	*bwon jor-noh*
Goodbye	**Arrivederci**	*ah-ree-veh-dair-chee*
Good evening	**Buona sera**	*bwon-ah sair-ah*
morning	**la mattina**	*lah mah-tee-nah*
afternoon	**il pomeriggio**	*eel poh-meh-ree-joh*
evening	**la sera**	*lah sair-ah*
yesterday	**ieri**	*ee-air-ee*
today	**oggi**	*oh-jee*
tomorrow	**domani**	*doh-mah-nee*
here	**qui**	*kwee*
there	**la/li**	*lah/lee*
What?	**Quale?**	*kwah-leh?*
When?	**Quando?**	*kwan-doh?*
Why?	**Perchè?**	*pair-keh?*
Where?	**Dove?**	*doh-veh*

Useful Phrases

How are you?	**Come sta?**	*koh-meh stah?*
Very well, thank you.	**Molto bene, grazie.**	*moll-toh beh-neh grah-tsee-eh*
Pleased to meet you.	**Piacere di conoscerla.**	*pee-ah-chair-eh dee coh-noh-shair-lah*
See you soon.	**A più tardi.**	*ah pee-oo tar-dee*
That's fine.	**Va bene.**	*va beh-neh*
Where is/are …?	**Dov'è/Dove sono…?**	*dov-eh/doveh soh noh?*
How long does it take to get to …?	**Quanto tempo ci vuole per andare a …?**	*kwan-toh tem-poh chee voo-oh-leh pair an-dar-eh ah…?*
How do I get to …?	**Come faccio per arrivare a …?**	*koh-meh fah-choh pair arri-var-eh ah…?*
Do you speak English?	**Parla inglese?**	*par-lah een-gleh-zeh?*
I don't understand.	**Non capisco.**	*non ka-pee-skoh*
Could you speak more slowly, please?	**Può parlare più lentamente, per favore?**	*pwoh par-lah-reh pee-oo len-ta-men-teh pair fah-vor-eh?*
I'm sorry.	**Mi dispiace.**	*mee dee-spee-ah-cheh*

Useful Words

big	**grande**	*gran-deh*
small	**piccolo**	*pee-koh-loh*
hot	**caldo**	*kal-doh*
cold	**freddo**	*fred-doh*
good	**buono**	*bwoh-noh*
bad	**male**	*ma-le*
enough	**basta**	*bas-tah*
well	**bene**	*beh-neh*
open	**aperto**	*ah-pair-toh*
closed	**chiuso**	*kee-oo-zoh*
left	**a sinistra**	*ah see-nee-strah*
right	**a destra**	*ah dess-trah*
straight on	**sempre dritto**	*sem-preh dree-toh*
near	**vicino**	*vee-chee-noh*
far	**lontano**	*lon-tah-noh*
up	**su**	*soo*
down	**giù**	*joo*
early	**presto**	*press-toh*
late	**tardi**	*tar-dee*
entrance	**entrata**	*en-trah-tah*
exit	**uscita**	*oo-shee-ta*
toilet	**il gabinetto**	*eel gah-bee-net-toh*
free, unoccupied	**libero**	*lee-bair-oh*
free, no charge	**gratuito**	*grah-too-ee-toh*

Making a Telephone Call

I'd like to place a long-distance call.	**Vorrei fare una interurbana.**	*vor-ray far-eh oona in-tair-oor-bah-nah.*
I'd like to make a reverse-charge call.	**Vorrei fare una telefonata a carico del destinatario.**	*vor-ray far-eh oona teh-leh-fon-ah-tah ah kar-ee-koh dell dess*-tee-nah-*tar*-ree-oh.
I'll try again later.	**Ritelefono più tardi.**	*ree-teh-leh-foh-noh pee-oo tar-dee.*
Can I leave a message?	**Posso lasciare un messaggio?**	*poss-oh lash-ah-reh oon mess-sah-joh?*
Hold on	**Un attimo, per favore**	*oon ah-tee-moh, pair fah-vor-eh*
Could you speak up a little please?	**Può parlare più forte, per favore?**	*pwoh par-lah-reh pee-oo for-teh, pair fah-vor-eh?*
local call	**la telefonata locale**	*lah teh-leh-fon-ah-ta loh-kah-leh*

Shopping

How much does this cost?	**Quant'è, per favore?**	*kwan-teh, pair fah-vor-eh?*
I would like …	**Vorrei …**	*vor-ray…*
Do you have …?	**Avete …?**	*ah-veh-teh…?*
I'm just looking.	**Sto soltanto guardando.**	*stoh sol-tan-toh gwar-dan-doh*
Do you take credit cards?	**Accettate carte di credito?**	*ah-chet-tah-teh kar-teh dee creh- dee-toh?*
What time do you open/close?	**A che ora apre/ chiude?**	*ah keh or-ah ah-preh/ kee-oo-deh?*
this one	**questo**	*kweh-stoh*
that one	**quello**	*kwell-oh*
expensive	**caro**	*kar-oh*
cheap	**a buon prezzo**	*ah bwon pret-soh*
size, clothes	**la taglia**	*lah tah-lee-ah*
size, shoes	**il numero**	*eel noo-mair-oh*
white	**bianco**	*bee-ang-koh*
black	**nero**	*neh-roh*
red	**rosso**	*ross-oh*
yellow	**giallo**	*jal-loh*
green	**verde**	*vair-deh*
blue	**blu**	*bloo*
brown	**marrone**	*mar-roh-neh*

Types of Shops

antique dealer	**l'antiquario**	*lan-tee-kwah-ree-oh*
bakery	**la panetteria**	*lah pah-net-tair-ree-ah*
bank	**la banca**	*lah bang-kah*
bookshop	**la libreria**	*lah lee-breh-ree-ah*
butcher's	**la macelleria**	*lah mah-chell-eh- ree-ah*
cake shop	**la pasticceria**	*lah pas-tee-chair-ee-ah*
chemist's	**la farmacia**	*lah far-mah-chee-ah*
department store	**il grande magazzino**	*eel gran-deh mag-gad-zee-noh*
delicatessen	**la salumeria**	*lah sah-loo-meh- ree-ah*
fishmonger's	**la pescheria**	*lah pess-keh-ree-ah*
florist	**il fioraio**	*eel fee-or-eye-oh*
greengrocer	**il fruttivendolo**	*eel froo-tee-ven- doh-loh*
grocery	**alimentari**	*ah-lee-men-tah-ree*
hairdresser	**il parrucchiere**	*eel par-oo-kee-air-eh*
ice cream parlour	**la gelateria**	*lah jel-lah-tair-ree-ah*
market	**il mercato**	*eel mair-kah-toh*
news-stand	**l'edicola**	*leh-dee-koh-lah*
post office	**l'ufficio postale**	*loo-fee-choh pos- tah-leh*
shoe shop	**il negozio di scarpe**	*eel neh-goh-tsioh dee skar-peh*
supermarket	**il supermercato**	*eel su-pair-mair- kah-toh*
tobacconist	**il tabaccaio**	*eel tah-bak-eye-oh*
travel agency	**l'agenzia di viaggi**	*lah-jen-tsee-ah dee vee-ad-jee*

Sightseeing

art gallery	**la pinacoteca**	*lah peena-koh-teh-kah*
bus stop	**la fermata dell'autobus**	*lah fair-mah-tah dell ow-toh-booss*
church	**la chiesa la basilica**	*lah kee-eh-zah lah bah-seel-i-kah*
garden	**il giardino**	*eel jar-dee-no*
library	**la biblioteca**	*lah beeb-lee-oh-teh-kah*
museum	**il museo**	*eel moo-zeh-oh*
railway station	**la stazione**	*lah stah-tsee-oh-neh*
tourist information	**l'ufficio turistico**	*loo-fee-choh too-ree-stee-koh*
closed for the public holiday	**chiuso per la festa**	*kee-oo-zoh pair lah fess-tah*

Staying in a Hotel

Do you have any vacant rooms?	**Avete camere**	*ah-veh-teh kah-mair -eh lee-bair-eh?*
double room	**una camera doppia**	*oona kah-mair-ah doh-pee-ah*
with double bed	**con letto matrimoniale**	*kon let-toh mah-tree-moh-nee-ah-leh*
twin room	**una camera con due letti**	*oona kah-mair-ah kon doo-eh let-tee*
single room	**una camera singola**	*oona kah-mair-ah sing-goh-lah*
room with a bath, shower	**una camera con bagno, con doccia**	*oona kah-mair-ah kon ban-yoh, kon dot-chah*
porter	**il facchino**	*eel fah-kee-noh*
key	**la chiave**	*lah kee-ah-veh*
I have a reservation.	**Ho fatto una prenotazione.**	*oh fat-toh oona preh-noh-tah-tsee-oh-neh*

Eating Out

Have you got a table for …?	**Avete un tavolo per … ?**	*ah-veh-teh oon tah-voh-loh pair …?*
I'd like to reserve a table.	**Vorrei prenotare un tavolo.**	*vor-ray prey-noh-tah-reh oontah-voh-loh*
breakfast	**colazione**	*koh-lah-tsee-oh-neh*
lunch	**pranzo**	*pran-tsoh*
dinner	**cena**	*cheh-nah*
The bill, please.	**Il conto, per favore.**	*eel kon-toh pair fah-vor-eh*
I am a vegetarian.	**Sono vegetariano/a.**	*soh-noh veh-jeh-tar ee-ah-noh/nah*
waitress	**cameriera**	*kah-mair-ee-air-ah*
waiter	**cameriere**	*kah-mair-ee-air-eh*
fixed price menu	**il menù a prezzo fisso**	*eel meh-noo ah pret-soh fee-soh*
dish of the day	**piatto del giorno**	*pee-ah-toh dell jor-no*
starter	**antipasto**	*an-tee-pass-toh*
first course	**il primo**	*eel pree-moh*
main course	**il secondo**	*eel seh-kon-doh*
vegetables	**il contorno**	*eel kon-tor-noh*
dessert	**il dolce**	*eel doll-che*
cover charge	**il coperto**	*eel koh-pair-toh*
wine list	**la lista dei vini**	*lah lee-stah day vee-nee*
rare	**al sangue**	*al sang-gweh*
medium	**a medio**	*a meh-dee-oh*
well done	**ben cotto**	*ben kot-toh*
glass	**il bicchiere**	*eel bee-kee-air-eh*
bottle	**la bottiglia**	*lah bot-teel-yah*
knife	**il coltello**	*eel kol-tell-oh*
fork	**la forchetta**	*lah for-ket-tah*
spoon	**il cucchiaio**	*eel koo-kee-eye-oh*

Menu Decoder

apple	**la mela**	*lah meh-lah*
artichoke	**il carciofo**	*eel kar-choff-oh*
aubergine	**la melanzana**	*lah meh-lan-tsah-nah*
baked	**al forno**	*al for-noh*
beans	**i fagioli**	*ee fah-joh-lee*
beef	**il manzo**	*eel man-tsoh*
beer	**la birra**	*lah beer-rah*
boiled	**lesso**	*less-oh*
bread	**il pane**	*eel pah-neh*
broth	**il brodo**	*eel broh-doh*
butter	**il burro**	*eel boor-oh*
cake	**la torta**	*lah tor-tah*
cheese	**il formaggio**	*eel for-mad-joh*
chicken	**il pollo**	*eel poll-oh*
chips	**patatine fritte**	*pah-tah-teen-eh free-teh*
baby clams	**le vongole**	*leh von-goh-leh*
coffee	**il caffè**	*eel kah-feh*
courgettes	**gli zucchini**	*lyee dzoo-kee-nee*
dry	**secco**	*sek-koh*
duck	**l'anatra**	*lah-nah-trah*
egg	**l'uovo**	*loo-oh-voh*
fish	**il pesce**	*eel pesh-eh*
fresh fruit	**frutta fresca**	*froo-tah fress-kah*
garlic	**l'aglio**	*lahl-yoh*
grapes	**l'uva**	*loo-vah*
grilled	**alla griglia**	*ah-lah greel-yah*
ham cooked/cured	**il prosciutto cotto/crudo**	*eel pro-shoo-toh kot-toh/kroo-doh*
ice cream	**il gelato**	*eel jel-lah-toh*
lamb	**l'abbacchio**	*lah-back-kee-oh*
lobster	**l'aragosta**	*lah-rah-goss-tah*
meat	**la carne**	*la kar-neh*
milk	**il latte**	*eel laht-teh*
mineral water fizzy/still	**l'acqua minerale gasata/naturale**	*lah-kwah mee-nair-ah-leh gah-zah-tah/*

		nah-too-rah-leh
mushrooms	**i funghi**	*ee foon-gee*
oil	**l'olio**	*loll-yoh*
olive	**l'oliva**	*loh-lee-vah*
onion	**la cipolla**	*lah chee-poll-ah*
orange	**l'arancia**	*lah-ran-chah*
orange/lemon juice	**succo d'arancia/ di limone**	*soo-kohdah-ran-chah/ dee lee-moh-neh*
peach	**la pesca**	*lah pess-kah*
pepper	**il pepe**	*eel peh-peh*
pork	**carne di maiale**	*kar-neh dee mah-yah-leh*
potatoes	**le patate**	*leh pah-tah-teh*
prawns	**i gamberi**	*ee gam-bair-ee*
rice	**il riso**	*eel ree-zoh*
roast	**arrosto**	*ar-ross-toh*
roll	**il panino**	*eel pah-nee-noh*
salad	**l'insalata**	*leen-sah-lah-tah*
salt	**il sale**	*eel sah-leh*
sausage	**la salsiccia**	*lah sal-see-chah*
seafood	**frutti di mare**	*froo-tee dee mah-reh*
soup	**la zuppa, la minestra**	*lah tsoo-pah, lah mee-ness-trah*
steak	**la bistecca**	*lah bee-stek-kah*
strawberries	**le fragole**	*leh frah-goh-leh*
sugar	**lo zucchero**	*loh zoo-kair-oh*
tea	**il tè**	*eel teh*
herb tea	**la tisana**	*lah tee-zah-nah*
tomato	**il pomodoro**	*eel poh-moh-dor-oh*
tuna	**il tonno**	*eel ton-noh*
veal	**il vitello**	*eel vee-tell-oh*
vegetables	**le vedure**	*leh-veh-dur-eh*
vinegar	**l'aceto**	*lah-cheh-toh*
water	**l'acqua**	*lah-kwah*
red wine	**vino rosso**	*vee-noh ross-oh*
white wine	**vino bianco**	*vee-noh bee-ang-koh*

Numbers

1	**uno**	*oo-noh*
2	**due**	*doo-eh*
3	**tre**	*treh*
4	**quattro**	*kwat-roh*
5	**cinque**	*ching-kweh*
6	**sei**	*say-ee*
7	**sette**	*set-teh*
8	**otto**	*ot-toh*
9	**nove**	*noh-veh*
10	**dieci**	*dee-eh-chee*
11	**undici**	*oon-dee-chee*
12	**dodici**	*doh-dee-chee*
13	**tredici**	*treh-dee-chee*
14	**quattordici**	*kwat-tor-dee-chee*
15	**quindici**	*kwin-dee-chee*
16	**sedici**	*say-dee-chee*
17	**diciassette**	*dee-chah-set-teh*
18	**diciotto**	*dee-chot-toh*
19	**diciannove**	*dee-chah-noh-veh*
20	**venti**	*ven-tee*
30	**trenta**	*tren-tah*
40	**quaranta**	*kwah-ran-tah*
50	**cinquanta**	*ching-kwan-tah*
60	**sessanta**	*sess-an-tah*
70	**settanta**	*set-tan-tah*
80	**ottanta**	*ot-tan-tah*
90	**novanta**	*noh-van-tah*
100	**cento**	*chen-toh*
1,000	**mille**	*mee-leh*
2,000	**duemila**	*doo-eh mee-lah*
5,000	**cinquemila**	*ching-kweh mee-lah*
1,000,000	**un milione**	*oon meel-yoh-neh*

Time

one minute	**un minuto**	*oon mee-noo-toh*
one hour	**un'ora**	*oon or-ah*
half an hour	**mezz'ora**	*medz-or-ah*
a day	**un giorno**	*oon jor-noh*
a week	**una settimana**	*oona set-tee-mah-nah*
Monday	**lunedì**	*loo-neh-dee*
Tuesday	**martedì**	*mar-teh-dee*
Wednesday	**mercoledì**	*mair-koh-leh-dee*
Thursday	**giovedì**	*joh-veh-dee*
Friday	**venerdì**	*ven-air-dee*
Saturday	**sabato**	*sah-bah-toh*
Sunday	**domenica**	*doh-meh-nee-kah*

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The rate at which the world is changing is constantly keeping the DK team on our toes. While we've worked hard to ensure that this edition of Florence and Tuscany is accurate and up-to-date, we know that opening hours alter, standards shift, prices fluctuate, places close and new ones pop up in their stead. So, if you notice we've got something wrong or left something out, we want to hear about it. Please get in touch at travelguides@dk.com

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